PATTERNS OF POWER · AL-ANDALUS

AL-ANDALUS

The Complete Study · 711 — 929 — 1031

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with Claude (Anthropic) · 2026

held as tested, not revealed

Held as tested, not revealed.

A case study in the Patterns of Power series.
Primary sources quoted exactly; modern scholarship paraphrased and credited.
Contested figures given as ranges. Nothing reconstructed from memory.

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Preface and Outline

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The collaboration

This is a case study in the Patterns of Power series, applying the series' framework to Muslim Iberia from the crossing of the strait in 711 to the abolition of the caliphate of Córdoba in 1031. The framework is a lens for reading how any order of power is founded, dressed and held: the floor of organised force beneath every order, the robe of doctrine laid over the floor to make the force cheap, the settlement that divides the spoils among the armed, the formation that installs the world-picture in each new generation, the cost column in which each subject prices his own compliance, the seam at which information is held apart, the default by which an elite coordinates without instruction, and — running through all of it — position logic, the proposition that men in like positions converge on like solutions because a position poses a problem with only a few good answers.

The study was built the way the series is built, one module at a time. The author brought the framework, the direction and the judgement of the whole, and held the collaboration to its disciplines; Claude, Anthropic's model, did the research — verifying every load-bearing quotation, date and figure against a source reproducing the primary text before any module was written — and produced the drafts, each presented and confirmed before the next was begun. The framework's concepts are the series'; the Andalusi application, and the refinements it yielded, are the work of the collaboration.

It exists to answer another study. The companion volume on the Visigothic kingdom of Spain examines a conquering minority that took the same peninsula two centuries earlier and was consumed by the order it found: within two hundred years the Goths had lost their language, their confession, their law and their name as a people. Here a comparably small minority took the same ground from the descendants of the first, and three centuries later it was the conquered who had taken the conquerors' language, law and faith. Same ground, much the same population underneath, opposite outcomes. Naming the variables that differed is what this study is for, and the twelfth module gathers them.

The standing problem

Every study in this series has a source problem. This one's is that almost nothing survives from the side that won.

There is no eighth-century Arabic document from al-Andalus of the kind this method prefers — no decree in its own hand, no treaty text, no fiscal register, no cadastre, no estate account. What exists instead is a tradition of storytelling about the conquest and the emirate, assembled long afterwards by men with their own reasons: the *Akhbar Majmuʿa*, of uncertain and probably late date; Ibn al-Qutiyya in the tenth century; Ibn Hayyan in the eleventh, surviving largely through later quotation; Ibn Idhari in the thirteenth or fourteenth; and al-Maqqari, on whom a great deal of the popular literature ultimately depends, in the seventeenth. Most of it survives today in modern critical editions and translations that are in copyright and cannot be quoted here in the original with a translation, as this project's discipline otherwise requires.

Worse, that tradition is not independent of its subject. The history of the emirate and caliphate was written at court: the Razi family served as official annalists across generations, their work is largely lost, and what reaches a modern reader descends at one or two removes from the record kept by the dynasty's own historians in the dynasty's own palace. There is no independent Muslim chronicle of the emirate and no archive against which to check it. The rebels of this study — Ibn Hafsun above all — are described throughout by the men who defeated them.

So the rule adopted here, and stated on the face of the modules rather than buried in the notes, is that Arabic narrative material is paraphrased with attribution, the compiler named and his distance from the events given on the page, and is never asked to carry a load only a contemporary document could bear. Where the numbers are traditional numbers — the seven thousand, the twelve thousand, the eighteen thousand — they are reported as what a named later writer says, not as facts.

Against that, three bodies of evidence are strong and the study leans on them hard. The Latin material is contemporary or nearly so and out of copyright: above all the *Chronicle of 754*, written by an anonymous Christian living under Muslim rule some four decades after the conquest and edited by Theodor Mommsen for the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* in 1894; Paul Alvarus's *Indiculus luminosus* of 854, printed by Migne in 1852; and the *Vita Iohannis Gorziensis*, written about 980 and edited by Pertz in 1841. Second, the material record — coins, inscriptions, buildings, mint distributions, and now pollen sequences — which is not a narrative, was not composed to persuade anybody a century later, and produced this study's most reliable findings, as it produced the companion study's. Third, two nineteenth-century French and

Latin translations of Arabic works whose copyright has long expired, which at least allow the words actually printed to be set on the page and their provenance stated.

And one further trap, which is peculiar to this subject and is named once and then refused. Three traditions of writing about al-Andalus are in circulation and all three are arguments about the present rather than findings about the past: a nationalist tradition that reads the three centuries as an interruption to be reconquered, a romantic tradition that reads them as a lost golden age, and a polemical tradition that reads them as subjugation with a good press. Each can quote real evidence, because each is built on a real half of the record. None is the object of this study, and the twelfth module explains why all three fail in the same way.

The disciplines

Five rules govern every module.

Quotation. Public-domain primary sources are quoted exactly, in the original with a translation, at the length the argument needs, because in an order held together by legal fictions the precise wording is the evidence and not its decoration. Modern copyrighted scholarship is paraphrased, briefly and with credit.

No fabrication. No quotation, date, attribution or figure is ever invented or reconstructed from memory. What cannot be verified against a source reproducing the primary text is dropped or flagged, never guessed. Contested figures are given as ranges, and this study has a great many: the population of the peninsula in 711 at four to six million on a very thin basis; the expulsion from al-Rabad in 818 at ten thousand and at twenty thousand; the caliphal library at a traditional four hundred thousand volumes that no one can count; al-Mansur's campaigns at somewhat over fifty; the date of Covadonga at 718 or 722, from a source written a hundred and seventy years later.

Gravity without partisanship. Suffering is held with gravity, and the study refuses both flattery and demonisation. Legibility is not pardon: to explain an order's logic, even to credit its competence, is never to excuse it. In this case the discipline cuts hardest in the direction of restraint, because al-Andalus has an unusually good modern reputation and a substantial part of it is deserved; the study affirms what is deserved and declines to let the reputation absorb the parts of the record that do not fit it.

Contribution. Every module returns a refinement to the framework, stated plainly in its closing section, rather than merely applying the framework to the case. The findings compound across the modules rather than being announced fresh in each.

Weakest evidence on the face of the module. Each part closes with a note separating exact primary quotation from paraphrased scholarship and naming its own weak links, including where they would embarrass the argument. One such link is

named twice in the text as well: Alvarus's description of the Christians of Córdoba as subject to their metropolitan by royal decree, which supports the study's central finding about formation, has not been verified here in a public-domain edition, and that finding rests instead on the conduct of the council of 852 as reconstructed in the modern scholarship.

What al-Andalus added to the framework

The case confirmed a good deal the framework had banked and added findings of its own. Chief among them:

That a fourth settlement fiction exists beside vacancy, recognition and divisibility, and is cheaper than any of them — **substitution**, the assertion that the obligation formerly owed to one sovereign is now owed to another, everything else standing; and that its precondition is exact, since a previous conquest must already have converted the relations into things and left the register running.

That the pair of floors the companion study opened needs a third term: a summoned floor fails by non-attendance and dies in a single battle, a **land-paid** stipendiary floor is chronic, provincial and mutinous but survivable for centuries, and a **coin-paid** stipendiary floor buys central authority at the price of converting a recurring illness into a fatal one — so that the year an order shifts its army from land to cash predicts a terminal crisis that will be fiscal rather than military.

That **the robe faces the competitor** rather than the majority: where the dangerous rival for legitimacy sits inside the conquered population the conqueror addresses the conquered and is eventually absorbed by them, and where the rival is external and of his own kind the conquered are never addressed at all. That an omission in a sovereign's standard formulae is itself a claim, datable at both ends. And that the physical medium of a legitimating message identifies its audience more reliably than its content does.

That there is a third position on the formation axis beside imposing and withholding, and it is neither: **capture**, in which the conqueror leaves the incumbent apparatus entirely standing, does not pay it, conditions its licence on its own performance, and runs an admitting apparatus beside it — with the diagnostic that one should look for the moment the conquered's own hierarchy is used to discipline the conquered's own zealots. That the incumbent formation is destroyed by the door beside it rather than by any attack on it, and that its institutional health is no indicator of the process. That the language of the elite's children leads the belief by about a century. And that the shape of a conversion curve identifies its mechanism, a delayed inflection ruling out any incentive that was present from the first year.

That there is a third kind of exit beside the territorial and the internal — **exit from the burdened category while remaining in place** — and that where it exists and the state welcomes it, the burdened never combine, because a grievance that can be resolved individually never accumulates into a collective one; so the pressure relocates to the almost-included, and the order is attacked not by its outsiders but repeatedly by its recent insiders.

That surveillance is the tell of a boundary people want to cross and are forbidden to, so that an arrangement whose permitted direction is the one the state prefers needs no enforcement apparatus at all; and that the cost of refusal is paid in demonstrations rather than in policing.

That the payroll writes the foreign policy, since an army paid in coin from plunder acquires a structural requirement for annual profitable war; and that the mint writes it too, since a state whose currency rests on an imported metal will pursue a supply line and call it a doctrine.

That a seam can be free — made of the alphabet rather than of policy — and that a free seam blinds the ruler as thoroughly as the ruled, so that he governs his own subject population through intermediaries who become indispensable and suspect at once. That the more strictly an obligation attaches to knowing, the less a ruler will be permitted to know. And that a book-burning is a payment, whose payee is identified by what was spared.

That the ideal object of elite coordination is an office that is prestigious, indispensable and **unobtainable**, the third property being the load-bearing one — so that the question is not how strong a sovereign is but to whom the office is unavailable, and how completely; that such an arrangement fails by a single defection rather than by decay, and therefore fails in months; and that fracture comes from the ceiling rather than the floor, since only the almost-included have both the grievance and the means.

That liberty can arise as an unavoidable by-product of a ruler's need for credible legitimation, because an endorsement is worth exactly the endorser's freedom to withhold it — a liberty which protects the certifier rather than the subject, produces no document because nothing was conceded, and is revocable the moment a cheaper endorsement appears. That an open door prevents constitutional residue, because a grievance settleable by admission produces careers and only a grievance that cannot produces documents. And that a conquest can foreclose a liberty without touching a person or a building, simply by not restoring the institution that had constrained rulers.

That where an army is paid from external plunder, the exhausting event is **peace**; that a fractured elite with cash buys an army rather than arming its people, so that the

structural change accrues to the supplier; and that the map of an order's successor states is a photograph of its own interior.

That the chronic item in a grim accounting is larger than the episodic one and is never counted because it has no date; and that where a fiscal record is corrected for mortality, the correction is the most reliable casualty evidence an order will ever produce, because a treasury striking names loses revenue at every stroke.

And, largest of all, that **the colonial bend is a function of retained exit rather than of conquest**. Four of the five predictions the framework attaches to colonial rule fail on this case, and they fail together, because the Umayyads of Córdoba had no metropole after 750 and no audience anywhere else that still cared. A conquering elite that can go home withholds formation, manages a seam, sorts extraction by a category the conquered cannot leave, and collapses when the will at the other end runs out. A conquering elite that cannot go home becomes a country within two generations, whatever the century. The test is a single question with a factual answer.

The arc

A landscape opening and twelve modules, each with a framework function and its own title.

Landscape — Twelve Thousand Berbers and Twenty-Seven Arabs. The two societies that met at the strait, and how deep each had been built: a peninsula whose Roman conquest had been naturalised for seven centuries and whose Gothic layer had already dissolved into it; a caliphate whose Arabic chancery was eleven years old and whose coinage was fifteen; and a garrison at Tangier of twelve thousand recent converts with twenty-seven men left behind to teach them.

1 — The Floor of Force. And Made Them Tributary. A raid that outran its orders, a Gothic army that came to the field out of ambition for its own king's throne, a conquest finished largely by treaty, a hole in the north that two orders in succession failed to close, and a conqueror thrown out of the caliph's presence by the scruff of the neck.

2 — The Settlement. The Son of the Gothic Woman. Land that was already a commodity, so that nothing had to be redefined and only the payee changed; a pact renewed by the caliph and still unbroken forty years later on a hostile witness's testimony; six Syrian regiments settled on a third of six provinces' revenue; and a philologist at the caliph's court who carried his descent from the last Visigothic king in his own name.

3 — The Robe. God, the Prophet, the Mint and the Year. Nine years from Latin to Arabic on the coinage; a hundred and seventy-three years of sovereign issues that

decline to name the sovereign; a denial of the Nicene creed travelling daily in the hands of a population that could not read it; and a caliphal title taken four months after a corpse was crucified.

4 — Formation. Not One in a Thousand. A church left entirely standing and captured at the collar; an emir who put down a movement of martyrs by ordering the bishops to do it; a law of paternity that moved children in one direction only; and a layman counting, in 854, how many Christians of Córdoba could still write a letter in Latin.

5 — The Cost Column. A Dinar a Head, and Half for a Slave. What compliance cost and what it bought; a suburb of the capital levelled and its population deported in a week; three doors out, of which two cost a man everything and the third cost him nothing he could count; and the head of the Christian community who collected the taxes and was crucified for it.

6 — Extraction. The Bells of Santiago. A third of the revenue spent for a quarter-century on a machine for being looked at; a caliphate whose gold came from a caravan terminus fifteen hundred miles away in territory it never ruled; an army reorganised in 991 so that it belonged to whoever held the treasury; and cathedral bells carried south on the shoulders of captives.

7 — Information and Suppression. Sell Me Your Soul. A letter the caliph could not be permitted to hear; a bilingual Christian clerk whose office was to carry written petitions in and written answers out; a library handed to a commission of jurists to be purged, and later sold to pay soldiers; and twenty years in which nobody could establish whether the caliph was alive.

8 — Elite Coordination and the Default. The One Thing He Did Not Take. Two hundred and fifty-three years in which no one outside one family claimed the throne; the most powerful man in the country keeping a caliph hidden rather than killing him, because a vacancy is an invitation; and three months from a chamberlain's son asking for the title to the end of everything.

9 — Plurality or Foreclosure. King and People Alike. One Latin sentence containing both the strongest protection and the sharpest foreclosure; a contract bought at the moment of surrender and outliving the leverage that bought it; a chief judge who rebuked the caliph from the pulpit and held office for sixteen more years; and three centuries of factional warfare that produced not one document a subject could point to.

10 — Change and Collapse. Not One New Man. Twenty-two years with no state, no treasury and no force available to suppress anything, and not one rural rising; both sides hiring Christian counts who learned the roads and came back for tribute; and

thirty successor principalities every one of which was founded by a component of the old hierarchy.

11 — The Grim Accounting. Struck from the Public Register. A governor ordering the slain Christian taxpayers deleted from the tax roll at the survivors' petition; a famine dated to April 750 by a Latin chronicler and corroborated by a pollen record; and the largest item in the whole account, which has no date because it was not an event.

12 — Convergence and Divergence. The Door That Was Open. Where this order meets Persia, Kenya and Rome; the one variable that separates a conquest from a colony; three positions on the formation axis; and the strongest case its defenders would make, stated at full strength and answered without netting the columns.

A note on sources

This front matter is descriptive and makes no primary-source claims of its own; every factual assertion about the case is established, with its sources and its flags, in the module it summarises. The framework it describes is the series'; the disciplines it lists are the ones the modules hold themselves to and document in their own closing notes. The reader who wishes to test this study should begin with those notes, which are written to make that testing possible — including where it would embarrass the argument.

Five items rest more heavily on inference or on unverified transmission than the rest, and each says so where it is used. The finding on formation depends in part on a phrase of Alvarus that has not been verified in a public-domain edition. The comparison between the Syrian *junds* of 743 and the Visigothic *tertiae* rests on a "third of the tax revenue" that reaches this study through modern scholarship rather than from a named primary passage. The text of the Theodemir pact is deliberately not quoted at all, its transmission being late and its versions divergent. The claim that no rural rising occurred during the civil war of 1009–1031 is an argument from the silence of a source tradition, and the force of that argument is set out on the page rather than assumed. And the conversion curve is Bulliet's, used for its shape and never for its decimals, with the objections to his method given in the text. A reader who declines all five will still find the study's structural, fiscal and comparative findings standing; he should decline them consciously, which is what the notes are for.

A running corrections file was kept alongside the modules and every item above appears in it, together with the sources located and rejected, the dates left unresolved, and one research hazard worth recording: a search during the work on extraction returned an encyclopaedia entry, machine-generated and confidently written,

containing wholly fabricated material about the caliphate — invented formulae and invented citations. It was discarded. Anyone building on this subject from the open web should expect to meet more of them.

Twelve Thousand Berbers and Twenty-Seven Arabs

The landscape: the two societies that met at the Strait in 711, and how deep each of them had been built.

Three arguments about the present, named once and set aside

No subject in this collection arrives more heavily freighted than this one. Three traditions of writing about al-Andalus are still in circulation and all three are, at bottom, arguments about the present rather than findings about the past. The first reads the three centuries after 711 as an interruption — a foreign occupation of a Christian and Spanish country which the Reconquest properly ended, so that the eighth century becomes the beginning of a wound and the fifteenth its healing. The second reads the same centuries as a lost garden — a society of tolerance and learning, three faiths at one table, destroyed by northern fanaticism and mourned ever since. The third reads them as subjugation with a good press — a conquered Christian population taxed into conversion and flattered afterwards by historians who should have known better.

Each of the three can quote real evidence, because each is built on a real half of the record. None of them is the object of this study. The method here is to set the exact words of an instrument beside the exact words of the men operating it, lay out the arithmetic, and leave the sum to the reader; and the three traditions all begin from the sum. So they are named here once, and then the study goes to the evidence and does not argue with them again.

What the evidence will carry, and what it will not

This project runs on exact quotation of public-domain primary sources in the original language. On this case that discipline breaks, and it must be said at the front rather than buried at the back.

Almost every Arabic narrative account of the conquest and the emirate postdates the events by two to nine centuries. The *Akhbar Majmu'a* is a compilation of uncertain date; Ibn al-Qutiyya wrote in the tenth century; Ibn Hayyan in the eleventh, and the great bulk of his work survives only through later quotation; Ibn Idhari in the

thirteenth or fourteenth; al-Maqqari, on whom an enormous amount of the popular literature ultimately depends, in the seventeenth. There is no eighth-century Arabic document from al-Andalus of the kind this method prefers — no decree, no treaty text surviving in its own hand, no fiscal register. What exists is a tradition of storytelling about the conquest, assembled long afterwards by men with their own reasons, and most of it survives today in modern critical editions and translations that are in copyright and therefore cannot be quoted here in the original with a translation as the discipline requires.

So the rule for the whole study is this. Arabic narrative material will be paraphrased with attribution, the compiler named and his distance from the events stated on the page, and it will never be asked to carry a load that only a contemporary document could bear. Where the numbers are traditional numbers — the seven thousand, the twelve thousand, the eighteen thousand — they will be given as what a named later writer reports, not as facts.

Against that, three bodies of evidence are genuinely strong and the study will lean on them hard. The Latin material is contemporary or nearly so and out of copyright: above all the *Chronicle of 754*, written by a Christian living under Muslim rule some four decades after the conquest, edited by Theodor Mommsen in the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* in 1894 and quotable exactly. Second, the material record — coins, inscriptions, buildings, mint distributions — which is not a narrative, was not composed to persuade anybody a century later, and in the companion Visigothic case produced the single most reliable finding of the study. Third, one seventeenth-century French and one nineteenth-century French translation of Arabic works whose copyright has long expired, which at least allows the words actually printed to be set on the page and their provenance stated, rather than paraphrased at two removes.

Where a line cannot be verified in a source reproducing the original, it is dropped rather than reconstructed. That will cost this study several vivid sentences, and it is the reason the rest of it can be relied on.

The peninsula: a conquest that had finished

The men who crossed the Strait in the spring of 711 did not arrive at an aboriginal country. They arrived at a thoroughly built order which was itself the residue of earlier conquests, driven so deep by time that nobody living inside it experienced it as an imposition at all.

The oldest layer was Roman, and it had taken two centuries of extremely hard war to install — Numantia starved into surrender in 133 BC, the Lusitanian wars, the Cantabrian and Asturian campaigns closed under Augustus around 19 BC. By the

fifth century the descendants of the peoples Rome had broken were simply Romans: they spoke Latin, they lived under Roman law, they worshipped in a Roman church, and Numantia was four hundred years in the past and nobody was thinking about it. That is not a way of saying the Hispano-Roman world was fake. It is the opposite. It was the most real thing in the peninsula, which is precisely why every later arrival ended up inside it.

The Gothic layer went on top and then, over roughly a century, dissolved into what it had been laid over. A separate Arian confession, a prohibition on marriage with the conquered, and a distinct law for *gothi* and *romani* were all taken apart by legislation and council: the marriage ban repealed under Leovigild in the 570s or 580s, the Gothic monarchy and nobility abjuring Arianism at Toledo in 589, and the *Liber Iudiciorum* promulgated in 654 as a single territorial code so that both peoples became *hispani*. By 710 "Goth" had become a pedigree and a name-stock rather than a language, a liturgy or a formation. It is tempting to count the layers here as four — pre-Roman, Roman, Gothic, and now Islamic — but the third had already been absorbed into the second. What the newcomers met was not Gothic Spain with a Roman substrate but a Hispano-Roman Christian order with a Gothic ruling name attached to it, and that distinction will matter a great deal later.

What that order offered a stranger who wanted to take it was, therefore, considerable. There was a functioning episcopate with metropolitan sees and a habit of meeting in council. There was a published, territorial law code that applied to everybody, in a language the administrative class could read. There were towns, mints, estates with proprietors, and a fiscal tradition inherited from Rome and decayed but not extinguished. And there was a throne with a rule for entering it — an elective monarchy in which the great secular and ecclesiastical lords chose the king.

That rule was, in 710, in the middle of failing. Wittiza died, and the chronicler writing forty-odd years later in Latin puts the succession in five words that are worth more than any later romance about it: *Rudericus tumultuose regnum ortante senatu invadit* — "Roderic tumultuously seizes the kingdom at the urging of the senate." And then, flatly: *regnat anno uno*. He reigns one year.

The coins say the same thing and say it independently, which is why they are worth more than the narrative. Roderic's surviving issues are very few — of the order of a dozen — and come from Toledo and from a mint read as Egitania in the west. Achila II's tremisses come from Tarragona, Girona, Zaragoza and Narbonne. The two distributions do not overlap. There were two kings striking gold in the same years in different halves of the peninsula, and no narrative source of any standing mentions Achila at all: his reign is known essentially from metal and from regnal lists. Whatever

the parties were and whatever they wanted, in 710 the kingdom had two men issuing the coinage of sovereignty at once.

Nor was the coast quiet. The same Latin chronicler, describing the campaign of 711, says of the Moors sent by Musa — *id est Taric Abuzara et ceteros* — that they had been *diu sibi provinciam creditam incursantibus simulque et plerasque civitates devastantibus*: long raiding the province entrusted to him and laying waste a good many cities. The Arabic tradition, at its own distance, records a reconnaissance in 710 under a commander named Tarif. Whatever else 711 was, it was not a bolt from a clear sky. It was the season in which raids that had been running for some time were followed up by a man who found the far bank in a condition to be exploited.

The men in Damascus: an order still under construction

Now the other society, which is the real work of this module, because the peninsula's is already well described and this one is generally not described at all.

In 710 the Umayyad caliphate was ruled from Damascus by al-Walid ibn Abd al-Malik, who had acceded on 9 October 705 and would die on 23 February 715. In the ten years of his reign the caliphate reached its greatest extent, and it did so on three fronts at once, which is the first thing to hold about the enterprise in Spain. Qutayba ibn Muslim was pushing across the Oxus into Transoxiana from 705, taking Paykand, Bukhara and eventually Samarkand. Muhammad ibn al-Qasim was on the Indus, storming Debal in 711. And Musa ibn Nusayr was finishing the Maghrib and, in the same season, sending men across the Strait. Spain was not a project. It was the western end of a general push that was also happening four thousand miles away, and the man in Damascus was reading despatches from both ends.

The second thing to hold is harder and more important, and it inverts the intuition this study was set up with. The order that crossed into Spain in 711 was not an old, deep, confident civilisation arriving to overwrite a young one. In several of the ways that matter most to this method, it was younger than the thing it was about to conquer, and it was still being built while the conquest was going on.

Count the dates. The caliphate had possessed an Arabic-language fiscal administration for barely more than a decade: the Iraqi *diwan* was converted from Persian into Arabic in 697, on al-Hajjaj's order; the Syrian *diwan* was converted from Greek into Arabic in 700. The all-Arabic, aniconic gold and silver coinage — no ruler's portrait, only the word — was introduced in 77 AH, 696–7, replacing a decade and a half of experiments that had included a standing caliph on the obverse. The Dome of the Rock had been finished around 691–2. The great congregational mosque at

Damascus, built on the site of the church of St John the Baptist, was under construction through al-Walid's entire reign and was not complete when Tariq crossed.

So the instruments by which this order announced what it was — its currency, its chancery language, its monumental architecture — were between eleven and twenty years old in 711. The Christian order in the peninsula had been running its own equivalents for three to four centuries. A conqueror is normally read as bringing a finished thing and laying it over an unfinished one. Here the arithmetic runs the other way, and it runs the other way even more sharply when one looks at the men who actually did the crossing.

The Maghrib: a conquest that had not finished

Ifriqiya and the Maghrib were themselves a palimpsest of conquests, and the most recent of them was still in progress.

Under the Roman layer lay a Punic one; over the Roman lay the Vandals from 439 and the Byzantine reconquest from 533; and North Africa in the seventh century was a Christian country with a Latin church, the church of Cyprian and Augustine, still holding cities on the coast. Arab raiding began in 647. The permanent base came in 670, when Uqba ibn Nafi founded Qayrawan as a garrison town rather than a raiding camp. Uqba was killed around 683 by Kusayla, a Berber leader of the Awraba who had submitted, accepted Islam, been treated as a subordinate, and turned; Qayrawan itself passed briefly out of Muslim hands. A second collapse followed under the Berber leader the Arabic sources call the Kahina. Only with Hassan ibn al-Nu'man's campaigns did the position hold: Carthage fell and the Byzantine presence in Africa was ended by 698. Tangier came under Muslim control at the very end of this sequence — the dating is variously given between about 708 and 710–711, and the sources disagree — which means that the port from which the conquest of Spain was launched had been in Muslim hands for something between three years and a matter of months.

The conquest of Ifriqiya, in other words, was sixty years old, had twice been thrown back, and had reached the Atlantic within living memory of the men who crossed in 711.

And its formation apparatus, as its own tradition describes it, was almost nothing. The best statement of this is Ibn Khaldun's, and its provenance must be stated precisely before it is used: Ibn Khaldun was writing in the 1370s, some six and a half centuries after the events, drawing on earlier reports he names; the text quoted here is the Baron de Slane's French translation of 1852, which is out of copyright. Describing Musa's settlement of the far west, he writes:

> *Tarec-Ibn-Ziad reçut de lui le commandement de Tanger et s'y installa avec douze mille Berbères et vingt-sept Arabes chargés d'enseigner à ces néophytes le Coran et la loi.*
> *"Tariq ibn Ziyad received from him the command of Tangier and installed himself there with twelve thousand Berbers and twenty-seven Arabs charged with teaching these neophytes the Qur'an and the law."*

Twenty-seven teachers for twelve thousand men. The numbers are a fourteenth-century writer's and are certainly schematic; the round twelve thousand in particular is the sort of figure that recurs in this literature and should not be pressed. But the *ratio* is the finding, and it is corroborated in outline by the standard modern reference accounts, which say the same thing in different words: that Musa garrisoned Tangier with Berber troops and left a handful of Arabs behind to teach them the religion. The word de Slane uses for the garrison — *néophytes* — is the point. These were not men raised in the faith. They were men who had recently accepted it, being instructed in it by twenty-seven people, in a port that had been taken a very short time before.

Ibn Khaldun then reports, on the authority of an earlier writer he names, the sentence that measures how shallow the whole thing was:

> *depuis Tripoli jusqu'à Tanger, les populations berbères apostasièrent douze fois, et que l'islamisme ne fut solidement établi chez elles qu'après la conquête du Maghreb et le départ de Mouça-Ibn-Noceir et de Tarec pour l'Espagne.*
> *"from Tripoli as far as Tangier, the Berber populations apostatised twelve times, and Islam was not firmly established among them until after the conquest of the Maghrib and the departure of Musa ibn Nusayr and Tariq for Spain."*

Twelve is a literary number and should be read as "repeatedly" rather than counted. But the clause after it is a dating claim and it is not literary: on Ibn Khaldun's own account, the religion of the conquerors was not securely installed in North Africa until *after* the army had left for Spain. He adds, a few lines earlier, that in the year 101 — 719–20 — the remainder of the Berbers embraced Islam, which puts the completion of the process nearly a decade after the crossing.

What that army did have was a fiscal settlement, and it had been in place for about a decade. Ibn Khaldun describes Hassan ibn al-Nu'man, on returning to Qayrawan, organising bureaux for the administration of the country and granting peace to all submitting Berbers *moyennant le paiement de l'impôt* — in return for payment of the tax; and then, by written ordinance, subjecting to the same tribute both the people of foreign race still in Ifriqiya and that portion of the Berbers who had remained Christian. A register, a rate, and a category for those who kept their religion. That

instrument, not a doctrine, is what the newcomers had actually finished building before they crossed.

None of this makes Berber Islam in 711 insincere. A thing recently installed is not a false thing; it was becoming these men's world, and within three decades they would be fighting and dying for a version of it against the Arabs who had brought it. It means only that in 711 it was *new*, and that its holders had almost no institution behind it that reached a child.

The bill for that came due in 740, when the Berber revolt broke out at Tangier — the same town — under Kharijite preaching, and tore the western Maghrib permanently out of the caliphate. That is a later module's subject. It is noted here only because it is evidence about 711: an army whose religion had been taught to it by twenty-seven men, and which was assigned the vanguard and a lesser share of the spoils, was carrying an unpaid account across the water with it.

What each of them could actually see

It is worth pausing on the four men whose decisions made this happen, because the temptation with a conquest of this size is to read backwards from what it became.

Al-Walid, in Damascus, could see three frontiers and a treasury. Spain, for him, was a province at the end of the Maghrib, reported by a governor he had reason to watch; there is no evidence he thought of it as a civilisational threshold, and the Latin chronicler's framing of what he achieved — a kingdom subdued and converted into a source of revenue — is very likely close to how the enterprise was described at court.

Musa ibn Nusayr could see a newly finished conquest that had collapsed twice before, a very large body of recently recruited Berber manpower that needed employing and paying, and a rich country across a narrow water whose garrison had, on the evidence of the raids, not been able to stop small parties landing. Whether he was authorised for more than a raid is exactly the kind of question the sources cannot settle; what can be said is that the enterprise's first stage looks like the ordinary continuation of a frontier that had been paying for itself in captives and plunder for sixty years.

Tariq ibn Ziyad could see a command. His origins are genuinely uncertain — the earliest Arabic historians say nothing about them, and de Slane notes a later authority reporting him a Berber of the Walhasa; other traditions make him Persian. What is not uncertain is his position: a client commanding a garrison town taken within the last few years, at the far end of a very long chain of authority, with a body of men whose loyalty ran to him rather than to Damascus.

And Roderic could see a contested throne, a rival striking coins in the north-east, and raiders on a southern coast that had been raided before. There is no reason to think

he read the landing of 711 as anything other than another and larger raid, because until it happened that is what every previous one had been. The field a man's position gives him is not a set of beliefs he could have corrected; it is the edge of what was there to be considered, and it feels, from inside, exactly like the edge of the world.

The arithmetic on the eve

The numbers are bad and should be given as bad. The population of the peninsula around 700 is usually put in the range of four to six million, and the basis for any such figure is thin. The invading forces are known only from the later Arabic tradition, which gives Tariq something like seven thousand with five thousand in reinforcement, and Musa some eighteen thousand the following year; these are traditional figures, repeated for centuries, and not one of them can be checked. The total Arab and Berber settlement across the whole eighth century is estimated by modern scholars in ranges running from a few tens of thousands upward, with wide disagreement and no reliable basis for narrowing it. What the genetic evidence adds is a boundary rather than a count: recent work on Iberian population structure finds north-west African ancestry in modern Iberians at regionally varying levels from zero to about eleven per cent, dated to an admixture event in the ninth to twelfth centuries — consistent with a settlement that was real, substantial and nowhere near a replacement.

Set against those unreliable figures the one comparison that is not unreliable, because it does not depend on any of them. On one side of the water, an order whose religion had been installed in the peninsula for three centuries and whose language and law had been installed for seven, with an episcopate, a published territorial code, a calendar and a network of schools attached to the cathedrals. On the other, an order whose administrative language had been in use for eleven years, whose coinage had carried its own creed for fifteen, whose great mosque was still scaffolded, and whose fighting men had been taught their faith by twenty-seven instructors and would, on their own later historians' account, not be securely Muslim as a population for another decade.

The intuitive account of what happened next is that a conquering minority kept its own formation and eventually converted the conquered, in contrast with the Goths, who had no such apparatus and were consumed by the one they found. On the eve, that account does not survive contact with the dates. At the moment of the crossing the conquerors had less of a formation apparatus than the Goths had possessed in 507, not more. Whatever explains the eventual outcome, it cannot be that a strong machine arrived and beat a weak one, because in 711 the machine did not yet exist. It was built afterwards, on the ground, out of materials that were themselves being invented in

Damascus at the same time — and finding out how, and when, and at whose expense, is the actual work of this study.

Reading the eve of 711 against the framework

Three things this landscape establishes, and one refinement it demands.

First, the recursion holds on the Iberian side exactly as the method predicts. A conqueror never meets a timeless baseline; he meets somebody else's finished conquest, naturalised until it feels like the shape of the world. Rome's wars in Hispania were as violent as anything that followed, and by 710 nobody experienced Latin, Roman law or the Catholic church as an occupation, because a built thing that has taken is more durable than a lie could ever be and is genuinely the world of the people formed inside it. That the origin was force does not make the belief false; it makes it a thing that was built and then became real. Naming the conquered origin of the Hispano-Roman order is not a way of saying it did not count. It counted more than anything else in the peninsula, which is why the Goths ended up inside it and why the next arrivals would spend three centuries dealing with it.

Second, the collection's standard picture of a conquest — organised force first, and a legitimating story laid over it afterwards to make the force cheap to hold — is visible here in an unusually clean form because the second element can be *dated*. The instruments of the story were being manufactured in the same decade as the conquest: the aniconic coinage of 696–7, the Arabic chancery of 697 and 700, the Damascus mosque of 705–15. These were expenditures the caliphate made when it already held uncontested force across a third of the known world, which is the diagnostic that legitimacy was genuinely needed by some audience — and the audience for a new currency and a new chancery language was not the conquered Christian peasantry of Spain, who would not see either for years. It was the caliphate's own soldiers, governors and rival claimants.

Third, and this is the refinement the case demands, the method has been running the recursion on one side only. It asks what naturalised former conquest the newcomer found, and how deep it went. It has not been asking the same question of the newcomer himself. This case makes that omission expensive, because here the conquering order is measurably the *younger* of the two and its own legitimating apparatus is under construction during the conquest. So the addition is: **run the recursion on both sides, and date each.** A conquest is a meeting of two builds at different stages of completion, and the relative depth of the two is a variable in its own right — one which predicts, among other things, whose formation apparatus will hold

the field in the first generation, and how much the conqueror will have to spend to build one at all.

A corollary, flagged as a lead to be tested rather than a claim: an army recruited from a population that has itself only just been conquered and only just formed carries an unpaid account, and the account falls due on the conqueror later. Tangier in 711 and Tangier in 740 are the same town, and the men who rose in the second year were the sons of the men who crossed in the first. Whether that generalises is a question for the modules on coordination and collapse, and it will be tested there rather than asserted here.

A note on sources. The Latin quotations are from the *Chronicle of 754* (*Continuatio Hispana*) as edited by Theodor Mommsen, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi* XI, *Chronica Minora* saec. IV–VII, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1894), which is in the public domain; the phrases quoted — *Rudericus tumultuose regnum ortante senatu invadit*, *regnat anno uno*, *diu sibi provinciam creditam incursantibus simulque et plerasque civitates devastantibus*, and *regnum Gothorum antiqua soliditate firmatum* — are given as Mommsen prints them, with his late-Latin spellings unaltered, and the translations are mine. The chronicler was an anonymous Christian writing under Muslim rule around 754, roughly four decades after the events, and he reckons by the Spanish era; his dating of the decisive battle to era 750 sits a year later than the conventional date of July 711, and that discrepancy is noted rather than resolved. A variant tradition preserved marginally through Perez and Mariana reads *Rudericus furtim magis quam virtute regnum Gothorum invadit* — "more by stealth than by valour" — but it is not the main manuscript text and is recorded here rather than used. The French quotations are from the Baron de Slane's translation of Ibn Khaldun, *Histoire des Berbères et des dynasties musulmanes de l'Afrique septentrionale*, vol. 1 (Algiers, 1852), p. 215, also public domain; Ibn Khaldun wrote in the 1370s, roughly six hundred and sixty years after the events, and himself attributes the report of the twelve apostasies to an earlier writer, so the chain is long and the passage is used as evidence of what the tradition said about the shallowness of Berber Islamisation, not as a contemporary record. The twelve thousand and the twenty-seven are his figures; the round number should be treated as schematic and the ratio, not the count, is what the argument rests on. Dates for Musa ibn Nusayr's appointment to Ifriqiya are given in the sources and the reference literature variously as 698 and 703, and the capture of Tangier variously between about 708 and 710–711; both are given here as ranges. Population figures are the weakest element: four to six million for the peninsula around 700 is the range in common scholarly use and rests on very little, and the invasion figures of seven thousand, five thousand and eighteen thousand are

traditional numbers from the later Arabic literature that cannot be independently checked. The estimate of north-west African ancestry in modern Iberians at zero to about eleven per cent, dated to an admixture event of roughly 860–1120, is from the genome-wide study of Iberian population structure published in *Nature Communications* in 2019 and is paraphrased. Modern scholarship consulted and paraphrased rather than quoted includes Roger Collins on the Arab conquest and on Visigothic Spain, and the standard reference accounts of the Umayyad administrative and coinage reforms; where those accounts disagree with one another the disagreement is reported. Nothing in this module rests on the legend of Count Julian, his daughter, or the House of Locks at Toledo, which are later literary constructions and belong in a module about storytelling rather than one about events.

MODULE 1

And Made Them Tributary

The floor of force — a raid that outran its orders, a conquest finished largely by treaty, and a hole in the north that two orders in succession failed to close.

What the nearest witness says

Everything written about the conquest of Spain in the following twelve centuries — the Arabic compilations, the Asturian chronicles, the nationalist and the romantic literatures alike — is downstream of a very small body of near-contemporary evidence, and the largest single piece of it is a terse Latin chronicle written around 754 by an anonymous Christian living under Muslim rule. It is the only narrative account composed within living memory of the events, it is hostile, it is difficult, and it is in the public domain. It is worth beginning with what it actually says, because the plainness of it is startling after the later literature.

Of the raids that preceded the crossing, the chronicler records that the Moors sent by Musa had been *diu sibi provinciam creditam incursantibus simulque et plerasque civitates devastantibus* — long raiding the province entrusted to him and laying waste a great many cities. Of the battle itself, dated by the Spanish era to 750 and by the Muslim reckoning to the year 93:

> *in era DCCL Transductos promonturiis sese cum eis confligendo recepit eoque prelio fugatum omnem Gothorum exercitum, qui cum eo emulanter fraudulenterque ob ambitionem regni advenerant, cecidit. sicque regnum simulque cum patriam male cum emulorum internicione amisit.*
> *"in the era 750, at the promontories of Transducta, he met them in battle; and in that engagement he cut down the whole army of the Goths, put to flight — which had come with him enviously and treacherously, out of ambition for the kingdom. And so he wretchedly lost the kingdom together with his country, along with the destruction of his rivals."*

Three things in one sentence. The site is named and cannot now be located with confidence; the promontories of Transducta point somewhere near the strait, and the modern candidates — the Guadalete, the Barbate, the shore of the vanished Laguna de la Janda — are inferences, not identifications. The date given is a year later than the conventional July 711, because the chronicler's era reckoning does not reconcile cleanly

with his other dating systems, and this study follows the usual dating while noting that its own best source disagrees with it. And the explanation offered for the defeat, by the only writer close enough to the event to have spoken to men who remembered it, is not that the Muslims were formidable. It is that a substantial part of Roderic's army had come to the field out of ambition for his throne.

That last clause is the hinge of this module, and it should be held in mind against everything that follows. The floor of the Visigothic kingdom did not fail because a superior force broke it. It failed because it was an aggregation of other men's armed followings, assembled by summons, in a year when two kings were striking coins in different halves of the peninsula, and a good many of the men who answered the summons wanted the summoner dead.

The raid that outran itself

What crossed the water was small, and its composition is the most important fact about it.

The traditional figures come from the later Arabic literature and cannot be checked: seven thousand with Tariq, five thousand in reinforcement, eighteen thousand with Musa the following year. They are round, they recur in that literature in other contexts, and no independent source corroborates any of them. What can be said with more confidence, because it is agreed across otherwise unrelated traditions, is the proportion: the force was overwhelmingly Berber, with a thin stratum of Arab officers. Its commander, Tariq ibn Ziyad, was a client of Musa's; the earliest Arabic historians say nothing at all about his origins, later authorities make him a Berber of the Walhasa, and other traditions make him Persian, so his own extraction is a matter on which the sources are silent rather than divided.

The base he crossed from had been in Muslim hands for a very short time — Tangier's capture is dated variously between about 708 and 710–711 — and the men in it were recent converts under instruction. The peninsula had already been probed: the Arabic tradition records a reconnaissance in 710 under a commander named Tarif, and the Latin chronicler independently records raiding that had been going on for some time before the decisive season.

Everything about the shape of the enterprise suggests that what was launched in the spring of 711 was a raid on the pattern of the previous sixty years of the Maghrib frontier — a profitable season's work, conducted by a client commander, while the governor stayed in Ifriqiya. The framework's own reading of what a man in a given position can see supports it: Musa in 710 could see a newly finished conquest that had twice collapsed, a very large body of recently recruited Berber manpower that needed

employing and paying, and a rich country across a narrow water whose garrisons had not been able to stop small parties landing. Nothing in that field of vision contains a province.

The Latin chronicler supplies a detail that points the same way from the receiving end. Faced with the landing, townspeople did not man their walls; they left. Cities that had obtained terms then *ad montana territi iterum effugientes fame et diversa morte periclitant* — fleeing again in terror to the mountains, perished of hunger and by various deaths. People flee to the hills from a raid, which passes. They do not flee to the hills from a government, which does not. The behaviour of the population in 711 is the behaviour of people expecting the thing to go away.

And the governor's own conduct is the strongest evidence of all. Musa did not lead the crossing. He crossed the following year, with a much larger force, once the scale of what had happened was clear — and the Arabic tradition, in several independent strands, preserves a quarrel between the two men in which Musa's anger at his client's success is the recurring motif, in one version to the point of imprisonment. A governor who had planned a conquest does not resent its execution.

What the sword actually did

None of which makes the conquest gentle. The chronicler who records the flight to the mountains also records what the second wave did, and his account of Musa's campaign is the most violent passage in the Latin evidence:

> *gladio, fame et captivitate depopulat, civitates decoras igne concremando precipitat, seniores et potentes seculi cruci adiudicat, iubenes atque lactantes pugionibus trucidat.*
> *"he depopulates by sword, by famine and by captivity; he throws down fair cities, burning them with fire; he condemns the elders and the powerful of the age to the cross; he butchers the young and the suckling with daggers."*

The register is that of a lament, and the vocabulary is drawn from a long tradition of writing about catastrophe; the passage sits a few lines from an explicit comparison with the fall of Troy, of Jerusalem and of Babylon, which is a signal that the author is reaching for the highest available pitch rather than reporting a survey. But the specificity of *cruci adiudicat* — the crucifixion of notables, a punishment with a legal rather than a rhetorical character — reads like something the writer had been told rather than something he had read. The honest position is that the chronicle establishes that the second campaign was materially more violent than the first, and does not establish a scale.

Where cities resisted, they were stormed and their garrisons killed; Mérida held out through a siege of several months into 712 or 713. Where they did not, they were taken by agreement. The relative weight of the two — capitulation on terms against capture by storm, *sulh* against *anwatan* — looks like the question that would settle how the peninsula's land was subsequently held, and it cannot be answered, for a reason that matters more than the answer would have.

The distinction between a town taken by treaty and a town taken by force is not primarily a military category. It is a fiscal one: in the developed Islamic law of conquest, the two produce different regimes of land tenure and different obligations to the treasury. The compilers who tell us which Andalusi towns fell in which way were writing two to five centuries later, in a world where that classification determined live claims, and they had reasons of their own to place a given place in one column or the other. The historiography of the early conquests has been alert to this problem for two generations. So the *sulh–anwatan* balance for al-Andalus is not a datum recoverable from the narrative sources; it is a set of retrospective legal assertions, and a study that tabulated them would be tabulating the eleventh century's opinion of the eighth.

What can be established is that the conquest was completed by dealing with the incumbent proprietors rather than by destroying them, and that at least some of the incumbent elite were inside the operation. The Latin chronicler, in a passage where Mommsen's text is damaged and the syntax is difficult, records that Musa, breaking up the neighbouring regions with a treacherous peace, had a number of surviving noble elders killed *per Oppam filium Egiche regis* — through Oppa, son of King Egica. The exact role the sentence assigns to Oppa is not fully recoverable from the Latin. What is in the text is a member of the Visigothic royal house standing in the chain that identified and destroyed the remnant of the Visigothic nobility, in the only near-contemporary account there is. The later Arabic and Christian traditions of collaboration by Wittiza's family are late and cannot carry weight; this is early and unfriendly and does not need to.

What the floor was made of afterwards

Now the question that separates this case from its predecessor on the same ground.

The Visigothic kingdom had almost no standing garrison network in the interior. Its army was an aggregation raised by summons from the armed households of great landowners, plus a proportion of their slaves; two of the longest laws in its code exist solely to compel attendance at the muster, and name bishops and dukes among the absentees. That is a machine which does not exist between wars, and it explains the shape of 711 completely: one lost battle, and there was nothing else to lose.

What replaced it was a different machine. The conquerors placed resident garrisons — Berber troops in the north and north-west, Arab and Berber contingents in the towns — under commanders appointed from above and paid, in stipend and in shares. Within thirty years the arrangement acquired its mature form, when the Syrian regiments that arrived in the peninsula after the Berber revolt were settled as *junds* on the fiscal revenue of named provinces, so that a body of soldiers was permanently attached to a district's income and could be called out by the government that assigned it. The details of that settlement belong to the module on who got what. The point here is structural: this floor was resident, professional and paid, where the Visigothic floor had been summoned, amateur and unpaid.

Resident floors do not evaporate when a ruler dies. They also fail differently, and the failure mode was on display almost immediately. In 740 the Berber troops of the Maghrib rose against the Arab governors over exactly the terms of their service — taxation levied on converts who should not have owed it, the vanguard's share of the spoils, the assignment of the hardest duties — and the rising crossed into the peninsula the following year. The garrisons of the north and north-west were the ones that went. When the Syrians arrived to suppress them, they promptly became a problem of their own, and had to be settled on provincial revenues to keep them from fighting the men already there.

That is the characteristic pathology of a stipendiary floor: not non-attendance but mutiny, and not one lost battle but a war among the troops. It is a longer death and a much more expensive one, and it will be the subject of later modules. What matters at this point is that the two orders on this ground, three centuries apart, held their force in structurally opposite ways and were destroyed by structurally opposite failures.

The north, and the same hole

And in one respect the two orders were identical, which is worth more than either of them separately.

The Visigothic kingdom campaigned in the northern mountains under six kings across a hundred years and never held them; its own chief apologist described a generation of Basque warfare as exercise rather than war, and by 673 a Gothic rebel was recruiting Basques against his own king. The newcomers did no better, and did no better faster. The far north-west and the Cantabrian and Basque country were raided, garrisoned thinly, and left. Berber garrisons were placed in the north-west and, within a generation, withdrawn.

Out of that gap came the thing that would eventually undo the whole arrangement, and the evidence for its beginning is thinner than almost anything else in this study.

The engagement conventionally called Covadonga, in which a leader named Pelagius is said to have destroyed a Muslim column in an Asturian valley, is first attested in the Chronicle of Alfonso III, composed at the Asturian court in the late ninth or early tenth century — a hundred and seventy years or more after the event — which supplies miraculous fog, falling rocks, and a hundred and twenty-four thousand enemy dead. The date is given in the modern literature as 718 or 722 and cannot be fixed. No Arabic source mentions it. The Latin chronicler of 754, who was writing far closer to it and had no reason to suppress a Christian victory, does not mention it either.

The discipline here is to state what is actually known and refuse the temptation of the origin story. What is known is that the northern mountains were not incorporated, that a polity emerged there in the first half of the eighth century, and that the earliest account of its founding was written by a court that needed the founding to have been a divinely favoured battle. Whether there was a battle at Covadonga, and what happened at it, is not recoverable.

What the fact establishes is more useful than the battle would have been. The same margin defeated two entirely different military systems in succession — a summoned aristocratic levy and a paid professional garrison force — separated by three centuries and sharing nothing but the ground. When a margin does that, it has stopped being evidence about either conqueror's competence and become a fact about the terrain and about the way the people in it were organised: dispersed, unurbanised, holding nothing a garrison could sit in, with nothing at the centre for a stranger to occupy and nothing worth the cost of taking.

The limit in Gaul

At the other end the floor reached its limit rather faster, and the sequence is dated.

Septimania — the Gothic province north of the Pyrenees, the last territory of the old kingdom — was overrun in 719 and 720; Narbonne fell, and with it the last Visigothic king, Ardo, disappears from the record. In 721 the governor al-Samh ibn Malik carried the campaign west and besieged Toulouse, and was defeated and killed by Odo of Aquitaine. Eleven years later a much larger expedition under Abd al-Rahman al-Ghafiqi drove north into the Frankish heartland and was met between Poitiers and Tours in 732.

The Latin chronicler's account of that engagement contains the earliest known use of a word:

> *diluculo prospiciunt Europenses Arabum temtoria ordinata et tabernaculorum ut fuerant castra locata, nescientes cuncta esse pervacua.*

> *"at first light the Europeans looked out on the tents of the Arabs drawn up in order, and the camps of the pavilions as they had been pitched — not knowing that all of it was empty."*

The Muslim army had gone in the night. *Europenses* — the men from Europe — sent out scouts, found the camp deserted, declined to pursue, divided the spoils and went home. It is a curiously deflated account of what later became the hinge of Western history, and it is the account of the writer closest to it.

Narbonne itself was held for about forty years and lost to Pepin in 759. After that the Pyrenees were the line, and the floor of al-Andalus had reached, within fifty years of the crossing, its permanent northern edge — which it would spend the next three centuries defending and never again seriously extend.

What it was for, and what happened to the men who did it

The chronicler states the purpose of the whole enterprise in five words, and they are the least rhetorical words in his account. Describing the caliph al-Walid, he writes that the kingdom of the Goths, established in ancient solidity, he attacked through the commander of his army named Musa and subdued, *et regno ablato vectigale fecit* — and, the kingship having been taken away, made it tributary. The companion Latin chronicle of 741, working from a shared source, has the same clause with the same sense: *regno abiecto vectigales fecit*, the kingship cast aside, he made them tribute-payers.

Not converted. Not settled. Not civilised. Made tributary. A kingdom was removed and a revenue stream was put in its place, and that — on the evidence of the two nearest Latin witnesses, both of them writing at the western end of the empire that did it — is what the conquest was understood to have accomplished.

The men who accomplished it were destroyed by the office that had employed them. Musa was recalled by order of the caliph after fifteen months in the peninsula, leaving his son Abd al-Aziz in his place along with the surviving Spanish nobility who had escaped the sword, and carrying gold, silver, ornaments, precious stones and pearls to Damascus. The chronicler's account of his reception is the coldest sentence in the chapter: he presented himself to al-Walid in the last year of that caliph's reign, found him angry, and *male de conspectu principis cervice tenus eicitur* — was shamefully thrown out of the prince's presence by the scruff of the neck. Al-Walid condemned him to be put to death under torture, and on the intercession of the leading men — to many of whom, the chronicler notes, Musa had given a good deal of his abundant wealth — commuted it to a colossal fine, and then died.

Musa paid it. He paid it, the chronicle says, on the advice of a most noble man named Urban, of the African region, brought up under the doctrine of the Catholic faith, who had accompanied him through all the provinces of Spain, and he raised the money through his freedmen with remarkable speed and assigned it to the treasury in the following reign. That detail deserves more attention than it usually gets: the conqueror of Spain travelled the peninsula with an African Christian adviser at his elbow, and turned to that man when he needed to understand a fiscal obligation. The men who took the country did not arrive with an administrative apparatus. They arrived with a general, a client commander, twelve thousand recent converts, and somebody who knew how the old system worked.

Abd al-Aziz governed from Seville, married Roderic's widow Egilona, and was murdered in 716 by men of his own army.

Reading the floor against the framework

Four things, and the second is the one this case was brought in to supply.

First, the founding act was not a bid for the ground. The method's opening question asks by what act an order was established — conquest, coup, or consolidation — and takes for granted that the act was aimed at the result. Here the evidence points to a raid whose scale was fixed after the fact by the collapse of the resistance rather than before it by anybody's plan: a client commander crossing while his governor stayed in Africa, a population fleeing to the hills as one does from a raid, a governor arriving a year late and quarrelling with his subordinate over the credit, and a metropole that recalled and ruined both men within three years. The consequence is legible in everything that followed, because an order founded by an act nobody had authorised has to improvise its institutions afterwards, town by town, out of whatever the incumbent left standing. So the question should be split: not only *by what act*, but *at what scale was the act intended*, because where the answer is "much smaller than what happened," expect the settlement to be negotiated rather than designed, expect the incumbent proprietors to survive, and expect the metropole's first substantive intervention to be disciplinary rather than constitutive.

Second, and building directly on what the companion case on this ground established, a summoned floor and a stipendiary floor are two machines with two different deaths, and naming the pair sharpens both. The Visigothic floor was raised by summons from the armed households of great landowners; it did not exist between wars, its state had to legislate its own army into being twice in eight years, and it was extinguished by a single lost battle because there was no second instrument behind it. The Andalusi floor was resident and paid, garrisoned in the towns and the marches,

and within a generation attached to the fiscal revenue of named provinces. It could not be dissolved by a defeat. What it could do — and did, in 740 and again in 741 — was mutiny over the terms of its own pay and precedence, and fight the government and then itself.

State the pair as a diagnostic. A summoned floor fails by non-attendance, and its characteristic document is a conscription statute aimed upward at the elite. A stipendiary floor fails by mutiny, and its characteristic document is a schedule of shares. The first dies quickly and quietly; the second dies slowly and takes the order's coherence with it. And the choice between them is rarely made freely: it follows from how the conquering force was recruited in the first place, which is to say from the settlement rather than from any decision about defence.

Third, where the same margin defeats successive orders, read it as a fact about the ground rather than a failure of the conqueror — and then look there for the next order. The northern mountains beat the Visigothic kingdom under six kings across a century and beat the newcomers immediately, and the two military systems had nothing whatever in common. What the two failures share is the terrain and the social organisation inside it: a dispersed, unurbanised population with no seat a stranger could occupy and nothing concentrated enough to be worth a garrison's running cost. The framework already holds that a conquest is cheap where the incumbent order pooled its coordination into an office someone else can enter, and expensive where it did not. The northern case adds the corollary at the margin: an area that pooled nothing is not merely expensive to hold, it is *permanently* unheld, by everyone, in succession — and it is therefore the ground on which any successor order will be built, because it is the only ground the incumbent never reached.

Fourth, a caution about the founding narrative that applies in both directions. This conquest generated two bodies of origin literature and neither is contemporary. The Arabic tradition supplies Count Julian, his violated daughter and the enchanted House of Locks at Toledo, in compilations written between two and nine centuries afterwards. The Christian tradition supplies Covadonga, the fog, the falling rocks and the hundred and twenty-four thousand dead, in a chronicle written at a court that needed an unbroken Gothic legitimacy for its own kings. Both are evidence about the people who wrote them and about nothing else. What survives from close to the events is one hostile Latin chronicler who says the Gothic army came to the field out of ambition for its king's throne, that the townspeople ran to the hills, that the second wave crucified the notables, and that when it was over a kingdom had been taken away and a tribute imposed. That is a thinner story and a colder one, and it is the one this study will build on.

A note on sources. The Latin quotations are from the *Chronicle of 754* (*Continuatio Hispana*) as edited by Theodor Mommsen, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Auctores Antiquissimi* XI, *Chronica Minora* saec. IV–VII, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1894), which is in the public domain; the parallel clause *regno abiecto vectigales fecit* is from the *Continuatio Byzantia Arabica* (a. 741) in the same volume, the two chronicles sharing a source at this point. Mommsen's late-Latin spellings are left unaltered and the translations are mine. The chronicler was an anonymous Christian writing under Muslim rule around 754, some four decades after the events, and his register in the passage on Musa's campaign is explicitly that of a lament, with the fall of Troy, Jerusalem and Babylon invoked a few lines away; the violence he reports is therefore given here as evidence that the second campaign was materially worse than the first, not as a measurement. The passage naming Oppa son of Egica sits in a part of the text where Mommsen's manuscript basis is damaged and the syntax is difficult; the exact role assigned to Oppa is not fully recoverable and no more is claimed than that a member of the Visigothic royal house appears in the chain. The chronicler dates the decisive battle by the Spanish era to 750, which corresponds to 712, a year later than the conventional July 711 followed here; the discrepancy is noted rather than resolved. The site he names, the promontories of Transducta, cannot be securely identified, and the modern candidates on the Guadalete, the Barbate and the former Laguna de la Janda are inferences.

Contested figures are given as ranges or as attributions. The force sizes — seven thousand, five thousand, eighteen thousand — are traditional numbers from the later Arabic literature and are not independently checkable; they are reported as what that literature says. The capture of Tangier is dated variously between about 708 and 710–711, and Musa's appointment to Ifriqiya variously to 698 and 703. The date of the engagement at Covadonga is given in the modern literature as 718 or 722; its sole narrative source is the *Chronicle of Alfonso III*, composed at the Asturian court in the late ninth or early tenth century, whose figure of a hundred and twenty-four thousand Muslim dead is universally treated as legend, and it is unmentioned in the *Chronicle of 754* and in the Arabic sources. The fall of Mérida is placed by different accounts in mid-712 or in 713. The caution about the *sulh–anwatan* classification — that it is a legal-fiscal category applied retrospectively by compilers with live interests in the result, and therefore cannot be tabulated from the narrative sources — follows the source-critical literature on the early Islamic conquest narratives and is stated here as that literature's caution rather than as a finding of this study.

Modern scholarship consulted and paraphrased rather than quoted includes Roger Collins on the Arab conquest of Spain and on the chronicle tradition, and the standard

reference accounts of the governors of al-Andalus, the campaigns in Septimania and Aquitaine, and the settlement of the Syrian *junds*; where those accounts disagree — as they do on nearly every date in the first decade — the disagreement is reported. The Julian legend, the story of his daughter, and the House of Locks at Toledo are late literary constructions and are named here only to be set aside; they belong to a module about storytelling.

MODULE 2

The Son of the Gothic Woman

The settlement — what the conquerors found already divided, whose title changed and whose did not, and the third that two conquests three centuries apart both took.

What the instrument found

Before asking how the conquered wealth was divided, it is necessary to say what condition it was in, because the answer explains almost everything about the division that followed and is the reason this settlement was the cheapest in the collection to install.

Land in the Iberian peninsula in 711 was a thing. Not an office held at a king's pleasure, not an inalienable patrimony of a descent group, not a share in a collective allocation redistributed among households — a parcel, with a boundary, held by a named person under a written law, alienable by sale, devisable by will, recorded, and assessed for tax. Rome had made it so across the two centuries of its conquest, and the Visigothic kingdom had kept it so for three hundred years, to the point that its own code contained a law forbidding anyone to disturb the division of lands made between Goth and Roman, and another instructing the judges of the cities to restore encroached Roman thirds to their owners *ut nihil fisco debeat deperire* — so that nothing should be lost to the treasury.

That single clause tells the newcomers everything they needed to know. The land was surveyed, the owners were named, the obligations were attached, and there was a register.

This matters because of what a conquering settlement usually has to do first. Where a conqueror wants to grant land that the incumbents did not hold as property — office-land, clan land, communal fields — he cannot grant it until he has performed a prior operation: converting a relation between persons into a transferable object. That operation is expensive, it requires a legislature, a survey and a court, and it is a social revolution dressed as a technical reform. It is the work that occupies most of the modern colonial settlements in this collection, and it takes decades.

Nobody had to do it here. The previous conquest had done it, eight centuries before, and the conquest after that had maintained it. The Arabs and Berbers who crossed in 711 arrived on ground where the commodity had already been manufactured and the paperwork was in the cupboard — and the consequence, which

will run through the whole of this module, is that the settlement of al-Andalus did not need to change what land was. It only needed to change who was paid.

The rule they brought with them

They brought a rule for spoils, and it is one of the few texts in this study that can be quoted in the original with complete confidence, because it is a passage of the Qur'an:

> وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّمَا غَنِمْتُم مِّن شَيْءٍ فَأَنَّ لِلَّهِ خُمُسَهُ وَلِلرَّسُولِ وَلِذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَالْيَتَامَىٰ وَالْمَسَاكِينِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيلِ
>
> *"And know that of whatever you take as spoil, a fifth of it belongs to God, and to the Messenger, and to the near of kin, and the orphans, and the needy, and the wayfarer." (Qur'an 8:41)*

A fifth to the sovereign and the causes he answers for; the remaining four-fifths divided among the men who fought. That is a rule for movable plunder — captives, coin, plate, animals — and it was applied. The Latin chronicler of 754, who had no idea what legal category he was describing, records Musa returning to Damascus with gold, silver, the work of assayers, jewelled ornaments, precious stones, pearls and unions, and everything else gathered off the surface of Spain, and presenting it to the caliph. That treasure train is the fifth, arriving. A Christian writing in Latin under Muslim rule documented the operation of an Islamic fiscal rule without recognising it, which is a small and precise instance of what this method is for.

But land is not movable plunder, and the developed law made the distinction sharply. Property taken by force in battle was *ghanima*, divisible among the troops. Property that came in without fighting — by capitulation, by flight, by the collapse of a state — was *fay'*, which belonged not to the soldiers but to the community, which in practice meant the treasury. And the settled practice of the eastern conquests, arrived at within a generation of the Prophet's death and carried west with the armies, was that conquered agricultural land was not parcelled out to the conquerors at all. It stayed with the people working it, who kept their title, their religion and their law, and paid.

The instrument, in other words, was not a transfer of land. It was a transfer of the render.

What actually changed hands

Something did change hands, and it can be sorted into three heaps.

The first was the Visigothic royal fisc — the crown lands, the estates of the kingdom's treasury, whatever the palace at Toledo had held in its own right. These

passed to the new state entire, and they are the foundation of the emiral and later caliphal domain that this study will meet again wherever a ruler needs money without asking anyone.

The second was the property of those who fought and lost, and of those who fled. The Latin chronicler's notice that the surviving Spanish nobility were the ones *qui evaserant gladio* — who had escaped the sword — carries its own arithmetic about the rest, and the estates of the dead and the departed had no defender. This is the heap the Arabic tradition means when it speaks of the great properties of al-Andalus falling to the conquerors, and it was very large in the districts where resistance had been serious.

The third heap is the one that did not move, and it is the largest of all. Where a town or a district capitulated, the proprietors kept their land, the church kept its buildings and its endowments, and the population kept its law and its courts. The Tudmir pact, discussed below, is explicit that churches would not be burnt and their sacred objects not taken. Everything in the Latin record for the following century is consistent with a Christian landholding and ecclesiastical population that remained in place, litigating, inheriting and worshipping, under bishops who continued to be appointed.

That is the settlement in its whole shape. A crown's estates confiscated, a defeated faction's estates confiscated, and everybody else left where they were with a new payee named at the top of the bill.

The pact, and the only near-contemporary witness to it

The one place where the terms of a capitulation survive is the agreement made with a Visigothic commander whom the Arabic sources call Tudmir and the Latin calls Theudimer, and it has to be handled carefully, because the two kinds of evidence for it are of very different quality.

Start with the good one. The Latin chronicler of 754, writing perhaps forty years after the event and hostile to the regime, gives Theodemir a short and admiring notice. He had inflicted no small slaughter on the Arabs and had made peace with them; already under the kings Egica and Wittiza he had beaten off Greeks who landed by sea in his own country; he was a lover of scripture, marvellous in eloquence and ready in battle. And then:

> *qui et aput Amir Almuminim prudentior inter ceteros inventus hutiliter est honoratus: et pactum, quem dudum ab Abdilaziz acceperat, firmiter ab eo reparatur. sicque hactenus permanet stabilitus, ut nullatenus a successoribus Arabum tante vim proligationis solvatur, et sic ad Spaniam remeat gaudibundus.*

> *"who also, being found more prudent than the rest before the Commander of the Faithful, was honoured to his profit; and the pact which he had earlier received from Abd al-Aziz was firmly renewed by him. And so it remains established to this day, so that in no way is the force of so great an extension dissolved by the successors of the Arabs; and thus he returned to Spain rejoicing."*

That is a Christian, writing in Latin, under Muslim rule, four decades after the conquest, stating three things: that a Visigothic commander travelled to the caliph's court and had his agreement ratified there; that the agreement was still in force at the time of writing; and that the successors of the men who made it had not dissolved it. It had by then survived the recall and ruin of Musa, the murder of Abd al-Aziz, at least a dozen governors, the Berber rising of 740, the arrival of the Syrian regiments and the fall of the dynasty in the East. *Hactenus permanet stabilitus.*

Now the poorer evidence, which is nevertheless the only place the terms survive. The text of the pact is preserved in Arabic compilations, none of them close to the event: the fullest transmission runs through al-Rushati, who died in 1147 and whose relevant work is lost, and reaches us in al-Dabbi, who died in 1200, in al-Himyari in the fourteenth or fifteenth century, and in Ibn al-Kharrat in the fourteenth. The versions differ. They disagree about which seven towns are named — Orihuela, Alicante, Mula and Lorca are constant, and the remaining three vary in identification between the witnesses. They disagree about the schedule of dues: some give four measures each of wheat, barley, grape juice and vinegar with two each of honey and oil, others four of every item. This study will not quote the text, because the standard English rendering is in copyright and the Arabic editions are not to hand, and a doubtful line is dropped rather than reconstructed.

What the versions agree on can be stated in paraphrase. It is dated Rajab 94 of the Hijra, which is April 713, and issued by Abd al-Aziz ibn Musa. It undertakes that Theodemir will not be removed from his authority; that his men will not be killed, enslaved, or separated from their women and children; that they will not be compelled in religion, and their churches not burnt nor their sacred objects taken. Against that it requires that he not shelter fugitives or enemies, not conceal news of enemies, and pay annually, per head, a gold dinar and the stated measures of produce, at half rate for slaves.

Read it as a transaction and its shape is unmistakable. What the Christian commander purchased was not his property, which nobody was proposing to take, and not his religion, which nobody had the apparatus to change. He purchased *not being moved*: the guarantee that he would remain in the position he already held, over the

people he already governed, under his own law. And what he sold was a fixed annual render in coin and kind, and an undertaking not to help anybody else.

That is a settlement conducted entirely in the currency of continuity. And its durability, attested by an unfriendly witness forty years on, is the strongest single piece of evidence in this module for what kind of arrangement it was.

Two doors into the inside

The settlement left the incumbent proprietors in place. It also left two doors through which they could cease being incumbents and become insiders, and both were open from the first years.

The first was marriage. Abd al-Aziz ibn Musa, governing from Seville, married Egilona, the widow of the king killed at the promontories — a match whose meaning nobody at the time can have missed, and which the later Arabic tradition surrounds with hostile stories about her influence over him. He was murdered by his own men in 716. The pattern nonetheless continued downward through the aristocracy for generations.

The second was conversion, and its effect on property was immediate and total: a Christian landowner who became Muslim ceased to be a *dhimmi* and ceased, in principle, to owe the poll tax, while his land stayed exactly where it was. The best-known case is a Christian magnate of the upper Ebro whom the Arabic tradition calls Cassius, said to have converted in 714 as a client of the Umayyad house and to have travelled to Damascus to swear allegiance to the caliph in person; his descendants, the Banu Qasi, ran the upper Ebro as a semi-autonomous principality for the better part of two centuries, and were still there, on the same ground, when Córdoba was a caliphate.

Both doors led to the same place. A man walked through and his acres did not move an inch; only his fiscal category and his patronage changed. That is the settlement's whole technique in one action.

The pedigree, and what it is worth

Which brings this module to the object it is named for.

In tenth-century Córdoba, the greatest philologist at the court of the caliph al-Hakam II, and the author of one of the earliest Arabic histories of the conquest of Spain, was known by a nickname that had become his name: Ibn al-Qutiyya, the son of the Gothic woman. He claimed descent from Wittiza, the last king of the united Visigoths, through a great-grandmother called Sara.

The story he tells about her is the most useful thing in his book for this module. Sara and her brothers, on their father's death, were done out of their inheritance around Seville by an uncle. So she had a ship built, sailed to Damascus with her brothers, and petitioned the caliph Hisham in person. The caliph found for her, and wrote to the governor of al-Andalus ordering the Seville estates restored. He then arranged her marriage to an Arab client of his house, with whom she returned to Spain; her descendants included governors of Seville, and one of them wrote the book.

Every part of that account has to be held at arm's length. Ibn al-Qutiyya was writing two and a half centuries after the events, at a court where a distinguished pedigree was an asset, about his own family, in a period that the scholarship has shown to be productive of exactly this kind of genealogy — Ann Christys has argued that the Banu Qasi's conversion story may belong to the same industry, a later Umayyad antiquarianism manufacturing lineages that bridge the conquest. As evidence of what happened to Sara in the 730s, the story is worth very little.

As evidence of something else it is worth a great deal, and the something else is more useful than the story would have been. In tenth-century Córdoba it was worth being descended from Wittiza. A man at the summit of the caliph's intellectual establishment carried his Gothic descent in his name and wrote it into his history. Nobody advertises descent from a class that was liquidated. The market value of the pedigree is a direct measurement of what the settlement did to the people who held it: it left them their property, their standing and their local authority, and made their descent a thing worth claiming rather than a thing worth hiding.

Set that beside the same peninsula one conquest earlier. By 700 "Goth" survived in Visigothic Spain as a legal category in the property law, a name-stock, and a pedigree in a book. Two and a half centuries after 711 it survived in al-Andalus as a legal category in the property law, a name-stock, and a pedigree in a book. The same word, doing the same three jobs, under two different conquerors — because both settlements had done the same thing to the class that carried it, which is to say, left it alone and taken its render.

The third

The settlement acquired its final and most consequential form thirty years after the conquest, and it should be described precisely because the arithmetic of it is startling.

The Syrian regiments that had been sent to crush the Berber rising in North Africa were beaten at Baghdoura in 741, and the remnant — some ten thousand men under Balj ibn Bishr — crossed into the peninsula under a treaty promising they would leave again within a year. They did not leave. They defeated the Berbers, then fell out with

the Arabs already settled in Spain, and for two years the province was a war between two bodies of Muslim troops. The governor sent from Ifriqiya to end it, Abu al-Khattar, arrived in May 743 and solved the problem by settling them.

Each Syrian regiment was assigned to a district. The Damascus *jund* went to Elvira, around Granada; the Jordan *jund* to Rayya, around Málaga and Archidona; the Palestine *jund* to Medina Sidonia and Jerez; the Homs *jund* to Seville and Niebla; the Qinnasrin *jund* to Jaén; and the Egyptian *jund* was divided between Beja in the west and Tudmir in the east. Al-Maqqari adds a regiment from Wasit at Cabra which no other source records.

And what they were given, on the account transmitted in the Arabic sources and followed in the standard modern scholarship, was a third of the tax revenue of the districts they were settled in, in return for collecting it and for military service to the governor.

A third of the revenue. On this peninsula, three hundred and twenty-five years after a barbarian army had been settled on it by a Roman government in shares that the law called the Goth's two parts and the Roman's third, another army of newcomers was settled on the same ground on a third of the revenue, and the surviving law of the earlier arrangement was still in the code being applied to the Christians who paid it.

The correspondence should not be pressed further than it will bear. Whether the Visigothic *sortes* and *tertiae* were shares of soil or shares of assessment is one of the great unresolved arguments of early medieval history, and this case cannot settle it. What this case does establish is that the instrument the argument is about — the assignment to a body of soldiers of a fixed fraction of the tax owed by a named district's cultivators, rather than of the cultivators' land — was available, was obvious, and was reached for by a governor with a mutiny on his hands and no time to survey anything. It is what you do when you need to pay ten thousand men out of a country you have not measured. That does not prove the Goths were paid the same way. It does remove the objection that such an arrangement is too sophisticated for the circumstances, because here are the circumstances, and here is the arrangement, and the man who made it had been in the country for a month.

What the grantee owed

The Field Manual's sharpest question about any settlement is not what was granted but what was demanded in return, because that single fact separates a durable arrangement from a brittle one: a grant purchasing political compliance leaves a dependant with a title, while a grant purchasing armed service leaves a rival with a retinue.

The answer here is unambiguous and it is the second kind. The Syrian *junds* owed tax collection and military service. They were settled as regiments, under their own commanders, on the revenues of named provinces, retaining their organisation, their internal loyalties and their arms. Nobody disarmed them; the entire point of settling them was that the province needed them armed.

So the settlement of 743 installed six or seven standing regional armies, each with an independent income, each recruited on a tribal and provincial basis carried over intact from Syria, and each with a grievance against the others already in its baggage. The prediction attached to that arrangement is a permanent civil-war risk installed in the same clause that solves the immediate crisis, and the instruction is to date the first revolt.

The date is thirteen years. Abu al-Khattar was overthrown in 745 and the province fell into open war between the Yemeni and Qaysi factions of the very regiments he had settled. When Abd al-Rahman I landed in 755 he did not conquer al-Andalus; he was invited into it by one faction of the *junds* against another, and he won at Musarra in 756 with an army largely composed of Umayyad clients and Yemeni Syrians. Every serious internal war for the next two and a half centuries was fought by the descendants of the men settled in 743, or by the paid troops eventually brought in to replace them, and the second of those developments will turn out to be the hinge of the whole story.

Who was inside, who was outside, and what marked the line

Finally, the boundary, because the framework asks what marks it and the answer here is unlike anything else on this ground.

It was not blood. It was not language. It was not landholding, since Christians, Jews and Muslims all held land under recognisable title. The line that mattered was fiscal, and it was drawn by the *dhimma*: the protected non-Muslim kept his religion, his law, his courts and his clergy, and paid the poll tax; the Muslim did not pay it. Everything else followed from that one distinction — the status of a person's testimony, his eligibility for office, his liability to military service.

And the decisive structural fact about that line is that an individual could cross it, in an afternoon, by an act that cost him nothing material and moved none of his property. Conversion was a door in the wall, and it was unlocked.

Hold that against what the same peninsula had been doing seventy years earlier. In 633 a council at Toledo had ruled that Jews compelled to baptism must be held to the faith they took under duress, and in the same acts had barred from public office *iudaei aut hi qui ex iudaeis sunt* — Jews, or those who are descended from Jews. Conversion was demanded, enforced, and then declared insufficient, because the disability was

made to follow the blood. That is a door in the wall with a second wall built behind it, and it took eighty years of re-legislation, an archive of signed abjurations and finally a decree of enslavement to maintain.

The newcomers' arrangement required none of that machinery, for the plain reason that both of its outcomes suited the state: a man who paid was revenue and a man who converted was a soldier and a subject, and the register did not care which. Whether that made it cheaper to run than the alternative — and whether the absence of a surveillance apparatus proves it — is the question the modules on cost and on liberty exist to answer. What belongs here is only the structural fact that the boundary of this settlement was a tax status rather than a descent, and that a tax status is the one kind of boundary a person can walk through without moving house.

Reading the settlement against the framework

Four things, and the first is the module's contribution.

One: there is a fourth settlement fiction, and it is the cheapest of them. The three the method currently names all operate on the *thing*. Vacancy declares occupied land empty, and dispossesses. Recognition declares un-owned land long-owned, and binds an elite by manufacturing the possession it then confirms. Divisibility declares a collective holding partible, and manufactures a market where none existed. Each is a legislative act performed on the definition of the property, and each is expensive, because redefining what land is requires a legislature, a survey and a court, and amounts to a social revolution.

Al-Andalus performed none of them, and needed none, because it changed the payee rather than the thing. The land stayed what it was — Roman-law property, titled, alienable, assessed — held by the same families under the same law, and what moved was the destination of the render. Call the fiction **substitution**: the assertion that the obligation formerly owed to one sovereign is now owed to another, everything else remaining as it stands. Its job is neither dispossession nor the binding of an elite but the *immediate capture of an existing revenue stream*, and its precondition is exact and stateable: **the previous conquest must already have converted the relations into things and left the register running.**

That precondition is why this settlement was installed in three years by men who had brought no administrative apparatus with them and had to borrow an African Christian to explain a fiscal obligation. It is also why the method should ask, of every conquest, not only what the instrument found but *who built what it found*. Where a conqueror inherits a commodified, surveyed, assessed landscape, expect substitution and expect it to be nearly free. Where he does not, he will have to manufacture the

property before he can grant it, and the manufacture is where his costs and his violence will be found.

Two: the consideration was armed service, and the case supplies the predicted failure with a date. The Syrian regiments settled in 743 received a third of their districts' revenue in exchange for collecting it and for military service, and kept their organisation, their commanders and their weapons. That is the medieval European form of the bargain, not the modern colonial one — a grant that leaves a rival with a retinue rather than a dependant with a title — and the failure it installs is a permanent civil-war risk in the same clause that buys the peace. The governor who made it was overthrown within two years; the factions of his own settled regiments then fought each other for a decade; and the dynasty that eventually took the province was let in by one of those factions against another. The instruction to date the first revolt is answered here in single figures, which strengthens the prediction rather than qualifying it.

Three: the market value of an old pedigree measures what a settlement did to the class that carried it. In tenth-century Córdoba the caliph's leading philologist was called the son of the Gothic woman, carried descent from the last Visigothic king in his own name, and wrote his great-grandmother's property suit into his history of the conquest. The story is late, self-interested and probably embroidered; the demand for it is neither. Nobody manufactures descent from a class that was destroyed. This is a cheap and transferable test, available wherever genealogical claims survive: ask whether descent from the pre-conquest elite remained an asset a century or three afterwards, and read the answer as a direct statement about whether the settlement dispossessed that elite or merely re-sourced its title.

Four: this settlement went exactly one stratum deep, as its predecessor on the same ground had done, and the interesting consequence is what that leaves unexplained. Every instrument described in this module — the fifth, the confiscated fisc, the capitulation pact, the third of the revenues, the conversion of a magnate, the petition to the caliph — is a transaction between proprietors. The people who worked the land appear in the Tudmir pact only as a rate: slaves pay half. Nothing in the settlement touched them, and nothing in it was designed to.

Which means the settlement cannot be the explanation for what this peninsula eventually became. A transfer confined to the top of a society changes who is paid and changes nothing else, and if the population of Iberia had done what the settlement alone would predict, it would have gone on being Christian and Latin-speaking under new landlords indefinitely, as it had gone on being Christian and Latin-speaking under Gothic ones. Whatever moved the majority moved it later and by another route. The

settlement's contribution to that outcome was a single structural feature and not a large one: it drew the line between inside and outside as a tax status rather than a descent, and thereby left a door that an individual could walk through without moving house. What made anyone want to walk through it is not in this module.

A note on sources. The Latin quotations are from the *Chronicle of 754* (*Continuatio Hispana*), sections 74–77, as edited by Theodor Mommsen, *MGH Auctores Antiquissimi* XI, *Chronica Minora* saec. IV–VII, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1894), public domain; Mommsen's spellings are unaltered and the translations are mine. The chronicler is an anonymous Christian writing under Muslim rule around 754; his notice of Theodemir is admiring, which makes his statement that the pact was still unbroken by the Arabs' successors a concession worth more than a friendly source's would be. The Visigothic laws referred to — the *antiqua* protecting the division of lands between Goth and Roman, and the law ordering restitution of encroached Roman thirds *ut nihil fisco debeat deperire* — are *Liber Iudiciorum* X.1.8 and X.1.16, quoted in the companion study of the Visigothic kingdom from the Latin as reproduced in the Spanish legal-historical literature; the standard critical text is Zeumer's. The conciliar phrase *iudaei aut hi qui ex iudaeis sunt* is canon 65 of the Fourth Council of Toledo (633), from the Latin of the *Collectio Hispana*. Qur'an 8:41 is quoted in Arabic from the standard text and the translation is mine.

The text of the Tudmir pact is **not** quoted here and this is a deliberate limitation. It survives only in Arabic compilations at a great distance from the event — the transmission running through al-Rushati (d. 1147), whose relevant work is lost, into al-Dabbi (d. 1200), al-Himyari (fourteenth–fifteenth century) and Ibn al-Kharrat (1298–1359) — the surviving versions differ on the identification of three of the seven towns and on the schedule of dues, and the standard modern English translation is in copyright while the nineteenth-century Arabic edition of al-Dabbi by Codera and Ribera was not available to me. The terms are therefore paraphrased from the agreed content of the versions, with the disagreements stated. The date, Rajab 94 AH / April 713, is given by the text as transmitted.

The Syrian *jund* settlement of 743 — the regimental pairings with Elvira, Rayya, Sidonia and Jerez, Seville and Niebla, Jaén, Beja and Tudmir, and the assignment of a third of district tax revenue against obligations of collection and military service — is reported from the Arabic tradition through the standard modern scholarship and is not quoted from any primary text; the Wasit regiment at Cabra is in al-Maqqari alone, who wrote in the seventeenth century, and is flagged as unsupported elsewhere. The figure of about ten thousand Syrians crossing under Balj is a traditional number and is not independently checkable. The account of Sara and of her petition to Hisham is

from Ibn al-Qutiyya's *History of the Conquest of al-Andalus*, written in the tenth century by her own descendant at a court where pedigree was an asset, and is used here as evidence of the tenth century's demand for such a descent rather than as evidence of the eighth century's events; Ann Christys's argument that the comparable Banu Qasi origin story may be later Umayyad antiquarianism manufacturing lineages across the conquest is registered and applies with equal force to Sara. Modern scholarship otherwise paraphrased and credited includes Roger Collins on the conquest and the Tudmir pact, and the standard reference accounts of the *junds*, of the Banu Qasi, and of the fiscal categories of *ghanima*, *fay'*, *kharaj* and *jizya*; the last of these are described here in their settled form and the considerable variation in early practice is not pursued, being the business of a later module.

MODULE 3

God, the Prophet, the Mint and the Year

The robe — a hundred and seventy-three years of coinage that declined to name its owner, a creed in a script the conquered could not read, and a title taken in the winter after a corpse was crucified.

What they printed first

The best evidence in this study is metal, and the reason is worth stating before the metal is described. A coin legend is a sovereign's shortest public statement about what it is. It is composed by the state, struck in quantity, dated, and distributed to everybody who handles money. It cannot be revised afterwards by a chronicler with an interest, it survives in the ground in numbers, and where it changes, the change can be given a year.

The sequence in al-Andalus begins within a year or two of the conquest and is legible in four steps.

The earliest issues are gold, and they are in Latin. They carry an abbreviated marginal legend of the type *SOLIDUS FERITUS IN SPANIA ANNO XCIIII* — a solidus struck in Spain in the year 94, that is 712–713 — dated by the Hijra but written in Roman numerals, and using, in the field, the Byzantine indiction. The denomination is the Visigothic and Byzantine one. The language is the language of the conquered. There is no ruler's name.

Around 98 of the Hijra, 716–717, a new type appears which is the hinge of the sequence. Its obverse carries an eight-pointed star and a Latin marginal legend of the same abbreviated kind, *FERITOS SOLIDUS IN SPANIA ANNO*. Its reverse is Arabic: in the field, *Muḥammad rasūl Allāh*, Muhammad is the Messenger of God; in the margin, *ḍuriba hādhā al-dīnār bi-l-Andalus sanat thamān wa tisʿīn* — this dinar was struck in al-Andalus in the year ninety-eight.

Two things are visible on that one disc. The Arabic is well cut and complete; the Latin is abbreviated and coarse, and on at least one known die the Roman numerals for the year are omitted altogether while the Arabic year is written out in full. And the country has acquired a name in Arabic, *al-Andalus*, set beside the old Latin *Spania*, which for a long time was thought to be the first attestation of that word anywhere.

Around 102, 720–721, under the governor al-Samh, the Latin disappears. The coinage becomes purely Arabic and epigraphic, on the model of the reformed Damascus issues, with no image, no indiction, and no ruler.

Four steps, from the conquered's language and the conquered's dating to the conqueror's, in about nine years. That is the robe being cut, and the tailoring can be dated to the year.

Two cautions belong here rather than in the notes, because both are live. The claim that the bilingual dinar of 98 gives the earliest attestation of *al-Andalus* is no longer safe: the word appears on a series of lead seals now argued to be earlier, which would move the innovation back into the governorship of Abd al-Aziz. And the market in early Andalusi transitional gold has been contaminated by forgeries which have entered peer-reviewed publication. Nothing in this module rests on any single specimen; the argument rests on the shape of the sequence, which is attested in quantity.

What the legends said

Once the coinage becomes Arabic it settles into a form that scarcely varies for two centuries, and its content is the substance of this module.

The obverse carried the *kalima*, the declaration that there is no god but God, alone, without partner, with the mint and date in the margin. The reverse carried, in the field, the whole of the hundred and twelfth sura:

> قُلْ هُوَ ٱللَّهُ أَحَدٌ · ٱللَّهُ ٱلصَّمَدُ · لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ · وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُۥ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ
> *"Say: He is God, One; God, the Eternal; He did not beget, nor was He begotten; and there is none comparable to Him."*

And in the reverse margin, an adaptation of the thirty-third verse of the ninth sura:

> هُوَ ٱلَّذِىٓ أَرْسَلَ رَسُولَهُۥ بِٱلْهُدَىٰ وَدِينِ ٱلْحَقِّ لِيُظْهِرَهُۥ عَلَى ٱلدِّينِ كُلِّهِۦ وَلَوْ كَرِهَ ٱلْمُشْرِكُونَ
> *"It is He who sent His messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, to make it prevail over all religion, however much the idolaters may hate it."*

Consider what that object was, and where it went. Every silver dirham in circulation in the Iberian peninsula for the better part of three centuries carried, in the hand of every person who bought bread with it, a formula denying that God begot or was begotten — which is not a general statement of monotheism but a precise contradiction of the clause of the Nicene creed, *genitum non factum*, on which the entire Hispano-Roman church had been formed since 589 and which every child in

that church recited. And around the edge, a declaration that the religion of truth had been sent to prevail over all religion.

It was the sharpest possible statement of supersession, addressed to the most exactly relevant audience, delivered daily into their hands.

And they could not read a word of it.

That is not a rhetorical flourish; it is the module's central fact and it has to be held precisely. In 720 the Arabic script was new in the peninsula and unreadable to virtually the whole population. Latin had gone off the coinage within a decade of the conquest. The state's most widely distributed public utterance was therefore, for its conquered majority, a blank — a piece of silver with marks on it, whose weight and fineness mattered and whose text did not exist.

Set that against the same peninsula one conquest earlier. Visigothic tremisses carried the king's name, in Latin, in a script and language its subjects used; and the Visigothic state's mass communication ran through conciliar canons read aloud in every church of the kingdom on a fixed date, in Latin, to a population assembled weekly by a calendar the same institution controlled. Two orders on the same ground, both with a legitimating claim to broadcast. One of them addressed the majority in the majority's language, in a building the majority attended. The other put its claim on metal in a script the majority could not decipher, and never translated it.

The medium tells you the audience.

The name that was not on the coin

Now the omission, which is the most informative thing in the whole sequence.

In 750 the Umayyad house was destroyed in the East by the Abbasid revolution. A survivor, Abd al-Rahman ibn Muʿawiya, reached the Maghrib, crossed to the peninsula in 755, was let in by one faction of the settled Syrian regiments against another, defeated the governor outside Córdoba in 756, and founded a dynasty that ruled for two hundred and seventy-five years.

In Islam the two classical marks of sovereignty are the *khuṭba*, the naming of the ruler in the Friday sermon, and the *sikka*, the right to strike his name on the coinage. Abd al-Rahman I and his successors exercised neither. From 756 to 929 the dirhams of al-Andalus name God, the Prophet, the mint and the year. They do not name the amir.

A hundred and seventy-three years of a fully independent sovereign coinage that conspicuously declines to name its sovereign.

The reason is legible from the position. To strike his own name was to claim the caliphate; to claim the caliphate was to declare the Abbasid in Baghdad a usurper and to assert headship over the whole community of Islam. It was a claim the Cordoban

house could not enforce and did not need. So it ruled as *amīr*, commander, in the name of nobody, and left the space where a ruler's name would go empty for six generations.

This is worth dwelling on because of how it inverts the usual evidence. In the companion case on this ground, the moment a Gothic king first put his own name on the gold, around 580, is one of the datable acts by which a monarchy invented its own majesty; the same reign produced a throne, a royal dress, a founded city and a synod, and the kingdom's own historian recorded that before that king, dress and seating had been common to kings and commons alike. Expenditure on the ruler's visibility is the ordinary sign of a warrant being manufactured.

Here the ruler spent nothing on his own visibility for six generations, and the abstention was itself the claim. What the emirate asserted, by silence, was that the office it declined to fill still existed and still belonged to its family. The Umayyads of Córdoba were not building a legitimacy; they were declining to concede that theirs had been taken. Their whole case was dynastic legitimism — Marwanid, Umayyad, Qurashi descent — and legitimism does not require a new story. It requires the refusal of somebody else's.

What the dynasty claimed instead

It claimed three things, and all three can be dated and located.

It claimed descent. The Cordoban Umayyads were the Umayyads, and everything about their court presentation ran through the genealogy — the family of the caliphs, of Quraysh, of the Prophet's own tribe. The tradition that the Abbasid caliph al-Mansur called Abd al-Rahman *ṣaqr Quraysh*, the Falcon of Quraysh, and the well-known verses on the solitary palm at Rusafa attributed to him, both come to us through later compilations and cannot bear the weight often placed on them; but their existence tells you what kind of claim the dynasty's admirers understood it to be making. It was a claim about blood and about the office that blood had once held.

It claimed the frontier. The annual summer expedition against the northern kingdoms, the *ṣā'ifa*, became the recurring public performance of the emirate and then of the caliphate — a campaign mounted almost yearly, often producing no territorial change, and functioning as an act rather than a strategy. A ruler who leads the war against the unbeliever every summer is making a statement about what he is for, and the statement's audience is the community that expects it of him.

And it claimed a building. In 785 or 786 Abd al-Rahman I began the congregational mosque of Córdoba, on a site his successors enlarged three times across two centuries, until al-Hakam II's extension of the 960s gave it the mosaic mihrab whose Arabic

inscriptions are among the most reliable dated texts this study has. It is the physical robe, and it survives.

The story attached to its site deserves a paragraph, because it is a story about legitimacy rather than a record of an event. The Arabic tradition holds that the Muslims at first shared the church of Saint Vincent with the Christians, and that Abd al-Rahman later bought the Christian half from them for the mosque. Whether anything of the kind happened is contested; the archaeological case has been argued in both directions and the literary version reaches us through later compilers. What is not in doubt is what the story does. It asserts that the ground under the greatest monument in al-Andalus was acquired by purchase, with consent, at a price — that is, lawfully, in a form a jurist could approve.

Note whom that reassures. Not the Christians, who are the vendors in the story and are not being addressed by it. It reassures Muslims, about a Muslim question: whether the sanctuary they pray in stands on properly acquired ground. Even the one legitimating story in this whole apparatus that has Christians in it is a story told to Muslims.

The winter of 928

The moment the name appeared can be dated to a fortnight, and the sequence that produced it is the clearest instance in this study of a robe being escalated by a rival rather than by a success.

For nearly forty years the most dangerous man in al-Andalus was Umar ibn Hafsun, of Hispano-Gothic descent, who from the fortress of Bobastro in the mountains behind Málaga ran an insurgency that at its height controlled a large part of the south and at one point came near to taking Córdoba. In 899 he renounced Islam, was baptised Samuel, and built a church at Bobastro. In 910 he offered his allegiance to the Fatimids, who had proclaimed a rival caliphate in Ifriqiya the year before. He died in 917. His sons held on. Bobastro fell in 928.

Abd al-Rahman III had the body exhumed. The Umayyad account is that it was found buried in the Christian manner, which established the apostasy; the corpse and those of his sons were then crucified in Córdoba, by the tradition outside the Great Mosque, and left there.

In January 929 — the sources give 17 January — Abd al-Rahman III took the title of caliph, with the regnal style *al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh*, the defender of God's religion, and the title *amīr al-mu'minīn*, Commander of the Faithful. The coinage changed with him. The dirhams of the caliphate name the ruler: the Imam al-Nasir li-Din Allah Abd al-Rahman, Commander of the Faithful. Gold, which had scarcely been struck in

al-Andalus since the 740s, resumed. In 936 he began building a palace city, Madinat al-Zahra, outside Córdoba.

Read the order of events. A rebel who had renounced Islam and recognised the Fatimid caliph is destroyed; his body is displayed; and within months the space on the coin that had been left empty for a hundred and seventy-three years is filled with a caliphal title.

The thing that had changed was not Abd al-Rahman's strength in the peninsula, though that had grown. It was the appearance of a rival claimant of his own kind. The Abbasids in Baghdad had been distant and, by 929, weak. The Fatimids were two hundred miles across the water, had taken the caliphal title in 909, claimed descent from the Prophet, were recruiting in the Maghrib where the Cordoban house had its own interests, and had just been offered the allegiance of a rebel inside al-Andalus itself. Against a rival caliph you cannot remain an amir.

Whom the robe was for

Which brings the module to its question, and to the answer the evidence gives without much room for argument.

The robe of al-Andalus was addressed, at every stage, to Muslims.

In the first generation it was addressed to the settlers and the troops: the coinage went from Latin to Arabic in nine years, before any appreciable part of the population could read Arabic, because the audience that mattered was the army and the governors and, through them, Damascus. After 756 it was addressed to the Muslims of the peninsula and to the Muslim world beyond it, in the negative form of a refusal to concede the caliphate. After 929 it was addressed to the whole community of Islam, against two rival caliphates, in the loudest register available.

At no point was it addressed to the conquered majority. There is no Andalusi Muslim literature of legitimation aimed at Christians as an audience to be won — no counterpart to a bishop of Seville opening his history of the Gothic kings by addressing Hispania in the second person as a sacred mother, ever-blessed, the queen of provinces. The Cordoban court's panegyric and genealogy were in Arabic, addressed to Arabs, and organised around descent from a tribe of the Hijaz. The Berbers who had done most of the conquering were barely inside that address themselves, which is a large part of why they rebelled in 740 and would matter again at the end.

And here the module has to report the thing that makes the whole study interesting, because it cuts directly against what one would predict from the foregoing.

The conquered converted anyway.

Not immediately, and the curve belongs to a later module. But by the middle of the ninth century a bishop of Córdoba's circle was complaining that Christian young men read and wrote Arabic better than Latin, studied Arabic poetry avidly, and had lost interest in their own scriptures. Whatever moved them, it was not this robe, because this robe was never pointed at them. Nobody in Córdoba wrote a word to persuade a Christian peasant that the order was legitimate. The order simply became the world he lived in, and his grandchildren were formed inside it.

There is one measurable consequence of that for the object this module began with. The coin legend that was illegible to a Christian in 720 was legible to an educated Christian in 850, on his own bishop's testimony, and by 950 was legible to a great many people who were no longer Christian at all. The text on the dirham never changed. The population's ability to read it did. That change is the study's real subject, and the robe is not its cause.

Reading the robe against the framework

Four things, and the second is the refinement.

One: an omission in a sovereign's standard formulae is a claim, and it can be dated at both ends. For a hundred and seventy-three years the dirhams of an independent state named God, the Prophet, the mint and the year, and left the ruler's name off. That is not a gap in the evidence and it is not modesty; it is a precise assertion that the office the name would have implied still existed and still belonged to the family that declined to fill it. The general instruction is to read the standard formulae of any order for what is missing from them, and to treat the year the gap is filled as a dated event with a cause. Here the cause is identifiable and it is not internal.

Two, and this is the module's contribution: the direction a robe faces is set by where the ruler's most dangerous rival for legitimacy sits, not by who is most numerous and not by whose belief would be cheapest to have.

The standing expectation is that a small ruling minority cuts its story for the people whose belief it actually needs — its own warriors, or a distant paymaster. The companion case on this ground broke that expectation: within two generations of the conversion of 589 the Visigothic robe had been re-cut for the conquered, addressing the country rather than the ruling people, in a Latin whose classical allusions only the Hispano-Roman episcopal and landowning class could hear. This case confirms the expectation and never wavers from it across three centuries.

Two conquering minorities, on the same peninsula, opposite answers. The variable that separates them is not size, and it is not the depth of the settlement, which was one stratum in both cases. It is the location of the competitor. The Gothic kings had no

sending power after 531, no external legitimator, no continuing supply of their own kind, and their most dangerous rivals were other Gothic magnates who needed the same bishops and the same councils to be made kings — so the contest for legitimacy was held entirely inside the conquered population, and the robe turned to face it. The Cordoban Umayyads had a live external rival of their own kind for the whole of their existence: the Abbasids they refused to acknowledge, and after 909 the Fatimids who claimed what they claimed. As long as such a rival existed, the argument that mattered was an argument among Muslims, and the conquered majority was not in the room where it was conducted.

State it as a rule to be tested elsewhere: **the robe faces the competitor.** Where the competing claimant is inside the conquered population, the conqueror will address the conquered and will eventually be absorbed by them. Where the competing claimant is outside and of the conqueror's own kind, the conquered will never be addressed at all — and the conqueror will not be absorbed, but neither will he be able to explain why his subjects converted, because he never spoke to them.

Three: the physical medium of a legitimating claim identifies its audience more reliably than its content does. Every dirham in al-Andalus carried, for three centuries, a denial that God begot or was begotten — the precise negation of the clause on which every Christian in the peninsula had been formed — and a declaration that the true religion had been sent to prevail over all religion. Read as content, that is the most pointed possible address to the conquered. Read as an object, it is not an address to them at all, because it was in a script they could not decipher and it was never translated, while the previous order on the same ground had put its claims into the majority's language and read them aloud in the majority's buildings on a fixed date. The test is cheap and general: identify the channel, ask who could physically receive the message on it, and let that answer overrule any inference from the wording.

Four: escalation in titulature dates the arrival of a competitor, not the arrival of success. The caliphal title of January 929 followed the fall of Bobastro by months and the Fatimid proclamation by twenty years; the rebel whose corpse was crucified had recognised the Fatimid caliph in 910. Abd al-Rahman III's position in the peninsula had been improving for a decade without any change in his style. What changed was that a rival caliphate had established itself across the water and had acquired a client inside his own territory. Where an order's rulers suddenly inflate their titles, look outward for a competing claimant before looking inward for a triumph — and expect the new title to be accompanied by expenditure, in this case a resumed gold coinage and a palace city begun seven years later.

A note on sources. The coin legends are quoted from the standard numismatic descriptions of the types and the translations are mine; the Arabic of Qur'an 112 and of Qur'an 9:33 is given in its Qur'anic form, and it is noted in the text that the coin margin carries an adaptation of the latter rather than the verse verbatim. The transitional sequence — Latin-only solidi of the type *SOLIDUS FERITUS IN SPANIA ANNO XCIIII*; the bilingual dinar of 98 AH with the eight-pointed star, Latin obverse margin and Arabic reverse; the shift to purely Arabic epigraphic issues around 102 AH under al-Samh — follows the numismatic literature on early Andalusi coinage, in particular the work summarised by Ariza Armada and by Tawfiq Ibrahim. Two cautions from that literature are given on the page rather than here because they are material: the identification of the 98 AH dinar as the earliest attestation of the toponym *al-Andalus* is no longer tenable, since the word appears on lead seals argued to be earlier and possibly to belong to the governorship of Abd al-Aziz; and the corpus of early Andalusi transitional gold has been contaminated by modern forgeries which have entered peer-reviewed publication, so no argument here rests on a single specimen. The characterisation of the emiral dirhams as naming God, the Prophet, the mint and the year but never the amir, and of *khuṭba* and *sikka* as the two classical marks of sovereignty, follows the standard numismatic and historical accounts; the specimen described in the text is of the type of al-Hakam I, AH 197, with the *kalima* on the obverse, Sura 112 on the reverse, and Qur'an 9:33 in the reverse margin. The caliphal dirham legend naming the Imam al-Nasir li-Din Allah Abd al-Rahman as Commander of the Faithful is from the catalogued Cordoban issues; legends vary between specimens of the same year, and the standard reference is Vives y Escudero.

Dates: the caliphal proclamation, 17 January 929; the fall of Bobastro, 928; Ibn Hafsun's baptism as Samuel, 899, and his offer of allegiance to the Fatimids, 910; his death, 917 or 918; the Fatimid caliphal proclamation in Ifriqiya, 909; the foundation of the congregational mosque of Córdoba, 785 or 786; Madinat al-Zahra begun 936. The exhumation and posthumous crucifixion of Ibn Hafsun and his sons is reported in the Umayyad tradition, including the detail that the body was found buried in the Christian manner, and that tradition is the party with an interest in establishing the apostasy; the event is well attested in the modern literature but its details come from the winning side and are given as such. The account of the congregational mosque's site as a church of Saint Vincent shared and then purchased is transmitted through later Arabic compilers, is contested archaeologically, and is used here only as evidence of the kind of legitimation the story was designed to supply. The tradition that al-Mansur called Abd al-Rahman I the Falcon of Quraysh, and the verses on the palm at

Rusafa attributed to him, both reach us through later compilations and are flagged in the text as unable to bear evidentiary weight.

The comparison with Visigothic practice — royal coinage in the king's name from about 580, Isidore's address to Hispania in the *Laus Spaniae*, and conciliar canons read aloud in every church of the kingdom on a fixed date — is drawn from the companion study of the Visigothic kingdom, where the Latin is quoted from public-domain texts. The complaint that Christian young men preferred Arabic letters to Latin is from the mid-ninth-century Córdoban Christian literature and is examined properly in the module on formation; it is cited here only for the fact of the linguistic shift. Modern scholarship paraphrased and credited includes Roger Collins and Hugh Kennedy on the emirate and caliphate, and the numismatic literature named above.

MODULE 4

Not One in a Thousand

Formation — who took the children of al-Andalus, why the Church was left standing rather than dismantled, and what a bishop discovered when he counted the letter-writers.

The thing being measured

The object of this module is not persuasion and not propaganda, and getting that wrong makes the whole period unreadable.

What is at stake is the apparatus that reaches a child before he is capable of assessing anything, and installs the frame through which he will assess everything afterwards: who his legitimate authorities are, who counts as his people, what is sacred and therefore not up for discussion, what the story of the world is and where he stands in it, and — underneath all of these — whose word he will take without checking, because no one at any age can check more than a sliver of what he knows and everyone must therefore trust somebody. That installation happens through institutions that touch the young as a matter of routine: the rite performed on the infant, the calendar that divides his week and his year, the building he is taken to, the language he is taught to read, the men whose authority the adults around him visibly accept.

Two consequences follow and both matter here. The first is that this cannot be done to adults by argument; adult judgement is well defended against direct persuasion, which is why the pamphlet fails and the childhood does not. The second is that it is never *not* being done. There is no unformed person; a child left unformed would not be neutral but feral. So a conqueror who declines to form the conquered has not created a vacuum. He has left the apparatus that was already running to go on running, and it will keep producing people formed against him.

That is what happened in the modern colonial cases in this collection, and it happened for a stated reason: to form a Kenyan as an Englishman would have been to admit him, and admission was the thing being withheld, so formation was rationed to a small administrative class and the rest were left to the apparatus already in place — which duly formed them, and eventually produced the men who took the country back.

Al-Andalus did not do that. It did something else, which is less obvious, more effective, and looks from a distance like tolerance.

The apparatus that was already running

What the conquerors of 711 found in the peninsula was one of the most complete formation systems in the post-Roman world, and it is worth listing its components as instruments rather than as devotions.

An infant was baptised, which is to say enrolled by rite in a named community before he could speak. His week was organised by a Sunday and his year by a liturgical calendar of fasts and feasts that fixed when people worked, when they married, when they ate meat and when they did not. He was taken to a building where a man in orders performed, in Latin, a rite whose authority nobody around him questioned. The Latin he heard was also the language of law, of property, of writing and of every text that mattered, so learning to read and learning to be a Christian were the same operation, conducted in the same places — the cathedral schools and the monasteries. Above the priest stood a bishop; above the bishop, a metropolitan; and above them, until 711, a series of national councils whose canons had the force of law and whose decisions the king enforced.

That last item is the one usually left out, and it is the most important. In Visigothic Spain the Church was not a parallel institution to the state. It *was* the state's formation apparatus, backed by the state's coercion. The councils of Toledo legislated; kings promulgated their canons; attendance and observance were compulsory by statute; and the penalty for the wrong belief was administered by royal officers.

In 711 that apparatus lost the state and kept everything else.

What the conquerors did with it

They left it standing. This was not a concession, it was the standard arrangement of the conquest settlement, and the capitulation terms preserved in the Arabic tradition are explicit that the churches would not be burnt and their sacred objects not seized, that the population would not be compelled in religion, and that it would keep its own law and its own courts.

For a century and a half the Christian institutional machinery of the peninsula went on doing exactly what it had done before. Bishops were appointed; sees continued; monasteries were founded and endowed; the Latin liturgy was celebrated; children were baptised. In 839 the Church in al-Andalus held a council at Córdoba to condemn a local heresy, which is to say the apparatus was still functioning well enough to convene its own hierarchy and discipline its own doctrine a hundred and twenty-eight years after the conquest.

Now the move that makes this case different from the withholding cases, and it can be dated.

In 851 a series of Christians in Córdoba began presenting themselves before the *qadi* to denounce Muhammad in public, an act that carried the death penalty, and being executed for it. The emir Abd al-Rahman II first arrested the Christian clergy of Córdoba, and released them in November 851 when the disturbances seemed to be subsiding. When a fresh wave began, he did not arrest them again. He ordered the bishops to convene a council at Córdoba to deal with the matter internally, and put the choice to them plainly: control your own people, or the Christian community loses its offices and its livelihoods.

The council met in 852. It discouraged further martyrdoms, in language its opponents found evasive. The metropolitan who presided, Reccafred of Seville, took the government's side, imprisoned clergy who would not comply — Eulogius among them — and was described by the movement's own apologist as a man to whom the Christians of Córdoba were subject *by royal decree*.

Read that as an instrument. The emir did not suppress the Church. He used it. The bishops' authority over their own flock was left entirely intact — indeed it was reinforced, since it now had the emir behind it — and was pointed at the emir's problem. The Christian child of Córdoba in 853 still had a bishop, and his bishop was still the legitimate voice of his religion, and that voice was now telling him that the men dying for his faith in the market square were wrong.

There is a name for what that does. Deference of the kind formation installs does not attach to a particular man; it attaches to the office and transfers to whoever holds it. A conqueror who destroys the office produces martyrs and drives the loyalty underground. A conqueror who ignores the office leaves it free to form the next generation against him. A conqueror who *captures* the office keeps the whole apparatus of trust running and inherits its output, because the collar is still there and the child still trusts it, and the collar now answers to him.

The rule about children

Alongside the captured hierarchy ran a second mechanism, which required no persuasion at all because it was a rule of family law, and which operated exclusively on children.

A Muslim man might marry a Christian or a Jewish woman. A Muslim woman might not marry a non-Muslim. And the children of a Muslim father were Muslim, by law, from birth. Add the third rule — that apostasy from Islam was a capital offence — and the arrangement becomes a ratchet with no reverse gear. Every mixed household in

the peninsula, in every generation, moved its children in one direction only, and could never move them back.

The effect compounded through the whole social structure. Concubinage worked the same way: the children of a slave concubine by a Muslim master were free Muslims, and the supply of such women — captives from the northern campaigns, and slaves brought through the trade this study will have to account for in a later module — was continuous for three centuries. The ruling house itself is the demonstration. Abd al-Rahman III, who took the caliphal title in 929, was the son of a concubine of northern Christian origin and the grandson, on his father's side, of a princess of Pamplona. The man who proclaimed the caliphate of Córdoba was, by ancestry, overwhelmingly Iberian and largely Christian-descended, and it made not the slightest difference to his status, because the rule that mattered ran through the father and was indifferent to everything else.

Set beside the same peninsula two centuries earlier, the contrast is exact and it runs the other way. In 633 a council at Toledo had ruled that the disability of Jewish descent followed the blood, barring from office not only Jews but *those who are descended from Jews*, so that conversion was demanded and then declared insufficient; and the state spent eighty years, an archive of signed abjurations, laws seizing children and a final decree of enslavement, trying to enforce a boundary it had itself made impassable. Here the boundary was made passable in one direction and sealed in the other, and no enforcement apparatus was needed at all, because the law did the work in the bedroom and the nursery rather than in the register.

Flora, and Leocritia

The mechanism becomes visible in the criminal record, and the two cases that frame the martyr episode are both about a child in a divided house.

Flora, executed at Córdoba in November 851, was the daughter of a Muslim father and a Christian mother. Her mother raised her secretly as a Christian. Her brother denounced her. Because her father had been Muslim she was in law a Muslim, and her Christianity was therefore not a religion but apostasy, and apostasy was capital. She was beheaded with a companion, Maria.

Eulogius, who wrote her case up and who is the movement's own advocate and must be read as such, was himself executed in March 859 for sheltering Leocritia, a girl of Muslim parentage who had converted to Christianity and was hiding from her family.

Strip away the hagiography and what is left is a legal machine doing exactly what it was built to do. The state's interest in these cases was not theological. It was that a

person the law assigned to one community was being formed by the other, in a household where the two claims met. The law of paternity said the child was Muslim; the mother's daily practice said she was Christian; and where those two collided the state resolved it with an executioner. That is a state defending the ownership of children, and it understood perfectly well that ownership of children is what the whole contest was about.

Note also what the cases reveal about volume. A movement of some forty-eight martyrs over nine years is small. But the two most consequential of them were products of mixed households, which tells you that mixed households were common enough by the 850s to be generating hard cases at a rate the courts had to manage. The ratchet had been turning for a hundred and forty years.

Not one in a thousand

Which brings this module to its central document, and to the reason it can be quoted here in full when so much of this study's Arabic evidence cannot: it is Latin, it was printed by Migne in 1852, and it is out of copyright.

Paul Alvarus of Córdoba, a layman, wrote the *Indiculus luminosus* in 854, in the middle of the martyr episode, to shame the Christian elite of the city into open resistance. Near the end of the surviving text he stops arguing and starts counting.

> *Nonne omnes juvenes Christiani vultu decori, linguae diserti, habitu gestuque conspicui, gentilicia eruditione praeclari, Arabico eloquio sublimati, volumina Chaldaeorum avidissime tractant, intentissime legunt, ardentissime disserunt, et ingenti studio congregantes, lata constrictaque lingua laudando divulgant, ecclesiasticam pulchritudinem ignorantes, et Ecclesiae flumina de paradiso manantia quasi vilissima contemnentes.*
> *"Are not all the young Christians — handsome of face, fluent of tongue, conspicuous in dress and bearing, distinguished for their learning in the gentiles' lore, exalted by their Arabic eloquence — handling the volumes of the Chaldeans most avidly, reading them most intently, disputing them most ardently, and, collecting them with immense enthusiasm, proclaiming them in praise with a tongue at once expansive and precise; ignorant of the Church's beauty, and despising the Church's rivers that flow out of paradise as things of no worth?"*

And then:

> *Heu, proh dolor! linguam suam nesciunt Christiani, et linguam propriam non advertunt Latini, ita ut omni Christi collegio vix inveniatur unus in milleno*

hominum numero, qui salutatorias fratri possit rationabiliter dirigere litteras. Et reperitur absque numero multiplex turba, qui erudite Chaldaicas verborum explicet pompas.

"Alas, the grief of it! Christians do not know their own language, and Latins do not attend to their own tongue, so that in the whole fellowship of Christ scarcely one man in a thousand is to be found who can properly compose a letter of greeting to his brother. And there is found, beyond counting, a great crowd who can expound the ornaments of Chaldean speech with learning."

Several things about this passage repay slow reading.

He will not name the language. Arabic is *Chaldean* throughout, the tongue of Babylon; the refusal to say the word is itself a small piece of evidence about the register of the anxiety.

He is not describing apostates. These are *juvenes Christiani* — young Christians, still in the fold, still counted in the *collegium Christi*, presumably still baptised and still attending. What has gone is not their religion. It is their formation's medium. They no longer read the language in which their tradition is stored, and they read fluently the language in which the other one is.

And he is not complaining about the poor. The young men he describes are the elite: well dressed, well spoken, well educated, socially conspicuous, distinguished in the new learning. This is the Christian landowning and professional class watching its own sons take up the conqueror's letters as the obvious route to a life, exactly as such classes always do, without any of them intending to leave the Church.

Alvarus is therefore reporting something more serious than he knows. A formation apparatus is not primarily a set of beliefs; it is a machinery for transmitting them, and it runs on a language, a literacy and a cadre of people competent in both. In 854 the Church of Córdoba still had its buildings, its liturgy, its bishops and its councils, and its congregations were presumably full. What it had lost was the next generation's literacy in the medium the whole system was written in. Its personnel supply was drying up while every visible indicator still looked healthy.

The count he gives — one in a thousand — is rhetorical and should be read as such. What is not rhetorical is the direction, and the date. In the middle of the ninth century, on the testimony of a hostile insider with every motive to overstate the Church's strength and none whatever to overstate its decay, the educated young of the Christian community of Córdoba were being formed in Arabic.

The martyrs, and who stopped them

The martyrs belong in this module rather than in the module on suppression, because what they were attempting was a formation act and because the way they failed identifies precisely what had gone wrong.

Between 850 and 859 some forty-eight Christians were executed at Córdoba, most of them for the capital offences of publicly reviling Muhammad or of apostasy from Islam. Almost all sought it deliberately: they walked into the *qadi*'s court, or in two cases into a crowded mosque, said what they knew would kill them, and were killed.

Read structurally, this is an attempt to re-arm a community's belief by the most expensive signal available. The one cue that cannot easily be faked is a person who pays for his belief at a cost that would be insane if he did not hold it. Martyrdom is that cue at its maximum, and it is why persecuted movements harden and why the calculated production of martyrs has been a standard technique of religious revival for two thousand years. Alvarus and Eulogius understood this perfectly. The *Indiculus* exists to argue that these deaths were true martyrdoms, and the whole point of establishing that was to make them count as evidence for the young men reading the volumes of the Chaldeans.

It did not work, and the reason it did not work is the finding.

The movement was not defeated by the emir. It was defeated by the Christian hierarchy. The council of 852 discouraged it. The metropolitan imprisoned its leaders. Eulogius himself records that many of the clergy and laity who had earlier acclaimed the martyrs changed their position under pressure. When the emir wanted the demonstrations stopped, he did not need soldiers; he needed bishops, and he had them.

For a Christian family of Córdoba watching this, the situation was not that their faith was being persecuted. It was that their faith's own authorities were telling them these deaths were a mistake, while the state that had killed the martyrs left the churches open and the liturgy running. The costly signal was thereby neutralised at the only point where it could have been: the point of interpretation. A martyr is not self-explanatory. Somebody has to say what his death meant, and in Córdoba after 852 the people authorised to say what it meant were saying it meant nothing good.

Eulogius was executed in 859. After him the martyrdoms almost stopped. The Church went on for centuries. Its capacity to counter-form had been broken twenty years before the caliphate was proclaimed, and it had been broken through its own chain of command.

What the other apparatus was building

Meanwhile the newcomers were constructing a formation system of their own, and it did what the Christian one had done before 711, with one difference that turned out to be decisive.

Its instruments were the same in kind. A congregational mosque in every town of any size, and the great one at Córdoba enlarged three times in two centuries. A day divided by five prayers audible across the whole town, and a year divided by the fast of Ramadan and the two festivals, on a lunar calendar which does not align with the agricultural or the Christian one and therefore cannot be quietly accommodated to it. Friday. An elementary school attached to the mosque, in which a child learned to read by memorising the Qur'an, so that — precisely as in the cathedral schools — learning to read and being formed were the same operation. Above that, a body of jurists trained in the Maliki school, which established itself in al-Andalus during the ninth century and became the state's law; and above them a *qadi* appointed by the ruler, whose court was the one that mattered.

The difference is the door. The formation apparatus of the modern colonial cases could not be extended to the conquered because extending it would have admitted them, and admission was the whole thing being refused. There was no such barrier here. The category of Muslim had, in doctrine, no ethnic floor: the son of a convert learned the Qur'an in the same school as the son of a Syrian soldier, could become a jurist, and did — a great many of the scholars of tenth-century al-Andalus were of native Iberian descent. An apparatus that admits can be extended without limit, because every person it forms is a gain rather than a liability.

That the doctrine was not matched by the society is the other half of the story and it is written across the ninth century in blood. Arab genealogical snobbery was real, the *muwallads* — Muslims of Iberian descent — resented it, and their resentment produced the great rebellions of the emirate, of which Ibn Hafsun's was only the largest. The gap between an apparatus that formally admits and a ruling class that informally does not is a generator of exactly this kind of revolt, and it very nearly destroyed the state. But note what the rebels were demanding. They were not asking to be let out. They were Muslims asking to be treated as Muslims. The apparatus had formed them completely and the complaint was that its promise had not been honoured.

When the curve moved, and what that rules out

The quantitative question — when did the peninsula actually become Muslim — has only one serious attempt behind it, and its limitations must be stated before its result is used.

Richard Bulliet's method reads the genealogies in Arabic biographical dictionaries and takes the first man in a family line to bear a Muslim name as the convert, then plots the distribution of those conversions over time. The objections are substantial and largely fair: the dictionaries record scholars and notables, not peasants; the al-Andalus sample is small, smaller than for his other regions; the identification of a convert from a name is inferential; and the resulting curve measures a process among the literate urban classes rather than a population census. Bulliet himself presented it as a hypothesis. It is used here for its shape and not for its decimals.

The shape is this. Conversion runs slowly for the first two centuries — by the tenth century, on his data, less than a quarter of the eventual total had converted. Then it accelerates sharply, and the explosive phase coincides closely with the reign of Abd al-Rahman III, 912 to 961. The process reaches something like eighty per cent around 1100.

Take the shape seriously for a moment, because it eliminates two explanations that are otherwise very attractive.

It eliminates conquest. The inflection is two hundred years after the conquest, in a period of internal consolidation and no significant territorial gain against the Christians at all. Nothing was being conquered when the curve turned.

And it eliminates the tax, which is the explanation most often reached for. The poll tax on protected non-Muslims was a real and continuous incentive to convert, and it certainly converted individuals throughout. But an incentive that is present from the first year produces a front-loaded curve, and this curve is not front-loaded. If the tax were the driver, conversion would have been fastest in the eighth century, when the fiscal burden fell on the largest possible non-Muslim population and the state most needed the revenue, and would have slowed as the base shrank. It did the opposite. An incentive constant across three centuries cannot explain an inflection in the tenth.

What produces a long flat period followed by a steep rise is a generational mechanism: something that operates on children, accumulates invisibly while every institutional indicator still looks healthy, and then shows up all at once when the accumulated cohorts become the adult population. The evidence for that mechanism is in this module. The ratchet in the family law had been turning since 711. The literacy of the Christian elite's own sons had shifted by 854. The Christian hierarchy had been made an instrument of the state by 852. The mosque network and the jurist

establishment matured across the ninth century. And the curve turned in the tenth, roughly one to two generations after the last of those.

The order did not convert the peninsula. It took its children, one household at a time, for two hundred years, and then counted them.

Reading formation against the framework

Five things.

One, and this is the contribution: there is a third option, and it is the cheapest and the most effective. The method has been working with two — destroy the incumbent formation apparatus, which is expensive and manufactures martyrs, or withhold your own and leave theirs running, which is what the modern colonial cases did and which guarantees that the population you refused to form is formed against you. Al-Andalus did neither. It left the incumbent apparatus entirely intact — buildings, liturgy, clergy, schools, councils, the lot — and captured its chain of command.

Call it **capture rather than withholding**. Its mechanism is precise and follows from how formation works: the deference a child is given does not attach to a man but to an office, and transfers to anyone who holds it. So an occupying power does not need to break the office. It needs to own the man in it. The apparatus goes on commanding the child's trust, at no cost to the occupier, and delivers whatever its now-answerable officers tell it to deliver. The Christians of Córdoba in 853 still had bishops, and their bishops were telling them the martyrs were wrong.

The diagnostic is cheap and datable: **look for the moment the conquered's own hierarchy is used to discipline the conquered's own zealots.** Where that has happened, the counter-formation is still running but has stopped counter-forming, and everything downstream — the language shift, the conversion curve, the collapse of the martyr movement — follows. In this case the date is 852 and the instrument is a church council convened on the emir's order.

Two: the language of the elite's children is the leading indicator, and it runs about a century ahead of the belief. In 854 the Christian community of Córdoba had its bishops, its liturgy, its monasteries and its congregations, and by every institutional measure was intact; and its own advocate reported that its educated young could not write a letter in Latin and could read Arabic poetry with fluency. The conversion curve did not turn for another sixty to a hundred years. This is not a coincidence and it is not two separate facts. A formation apparatus is a transmission machine running on a language, and when the young stop being competent in that language the machine has already lost its next cadre, whatever the attendance figures say. The instruction is to

stop counting the faithful and start counting who can read the tradition's own texts, and to expect the belief to follow the literacy by a generation or two.

Three: the shape of a conversion curve identifies the mechanism, and a delayed inflection rules out incentives. Where the curve is front-loaded, an incentive was doing the work — tax relief, office, safety — because incentives act on adults and act immediately. Where the curve is flat for generations and then steep, the mechanism was formation, because formation acts on children, is invisible while it accumulates, and reports its results only when the formed cohorts become the population. The al-Andalus curve is the second kind, and the poll tax, which was present and constant from the first year, therefore cannot be its cause however plausible it looks in the abstract.

Four: a formation apparatus that admits can be extended; one that must exclude cannot. This is what separates this case from the withholding cases more sharply than anything about doctrine. The British could not form Kenyans as Englishmen without conceding that Kenyans could be Englishmen, so the formation had to be rationed and the rationing was the policy. The category of Muslim had no ethnic floor in doctrine, so forming the conquered cost the conquerors nothing they were unwilling to give — a convert's son in the mosque school was a gain, not a claim on the ruling class's position. The corollary is the ninth century's whole history of rebellion: where the doctrine admits and the ruling class does not, the people the apparatus has fully formed will revolt, and they will revolt not to leave but to be given what the formation promised them. The *muwallad* risings are that, and they are the price of the gap.

Five, and it is the uncomfortable one: this module and the last one point in opposite directions, and both are correct. The legitimating story of al-Andalus was never addressed to the conquered — no Arabic literature was written to persuade a Christian of anything, and the state's most widely distributed public claim travelled for three centuries in a script the conquered could not read. And yet the conquered were absorbed. The resolution is that a story told to an audience and an institution that takes children are two different machines, and they can face in opposite directions without contradiction. The address goes where the ruler's rivals are. The apparatus goes where the children are. **A conqueror can decline to argue with the conquered while quietly taking their sons**, and the second is the one that decides the outcome; which is why an order can look, in its own literature, as though it never noticed the people it was in the process of replacing.

A note on sources. The Latin of Paul Alvarus is quoted from the *Indiculus luminosus* §35 as printed in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 121, cols. 555–556 (Paris, 1852), which is in the public domain; the text was read from a facsimile of that edition

and the translations are mine. Migne's apparatus records variants at several of the words quoted — Aldrete's readings differ at *tractant*, at *linguam*, at *omni* and at *Et reperitur*, and the Córdoba manuscript reads *multiplices turbas* for *multiplex turba* and *gentilici eruditioni* for *gentilicia eruditione* — and none of these alters the sense on which the argument rests. Migne's note at the end of the passage records that the Córdoba codex stops there and that the second book Alvarus promised is lost. The phrase *lata constrictaque lingua* is difficult and the translation offered is a reading, not a certainty. The critical edition now standard is Juan Gil's *Corpus Scriptorum Muzarabicorum* (Madrid, 1973), which is in copyright and was not used.

The martyr episode is known almost entirely from Eulogius's *Memoriale Sanctorum* and *Liber apologeticus* and from Alvarus's *Vita Eulogii* — that is, from two men who were the movement's advocates, one of whom died in it. Their account of the number of martyrs (conventionally forty-eight between 850 and 859), of the circumstances of individual cases, and of the conduct of the Christian hierarchy is the account of an interested party and is treated as such throughout; where the argument here depends on their testimony it depends on facts against their own interest, chiefly that their own bishops opposed them. The cases of Flora and Maria (November 851) and of Leocritia and Eulogius (March 859) are from Eulogius and Alvarus respectively. The sequence of the emir's response — the arrest of the Córdoban clergy, their release in November 851, and the order to convene a council when disturbances resumed — and the role of Reccafred, metropolitan of Seville, follow the modern scholarship on the episode, principally Kenneth Baxter Wolf and Jessica Coope, paraphrased and credited; the description of the Córdoban Christians as subject to Reccafred by royal decree is Alvarus's, in the *Vita Eulogii*, reported here from that scholarship rather than quoted, since the passage was not verified in a public-domain edition. The council of 839 at Córdoba is attested in the Mozarabic corpus.

The conversion curve is Richard Bulliet's, from *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period* (1979), summarised from the standard restatements of his al-Andalus data: slow growth to the tenth century with under a quarter of eventual converts by then, an explosive phase coinciding closely with the reign of Abd al-Rahman III (912–961), and roughly eighty per cent completion by about 1100. The criticisms are given on the page and are not marginal — the sample for al-Andalus is small, the biographical dictionaries record notables rather than the general population, the identification of converts from names is inferential, and Bulliet presented the model as a hypothesis. No decimal figure from it is relied on here; only the shape, and the shape is what the argument uses.

The rules of Islamic family law described — that a Muslim man may marry a *dhimmi* woman and a Muslim woman may not marry a non-Muslim, that children follow the father's religion, and that apostasy is capital — are given in their settled classical form; early practice varied more than this summary allows, and the variation is not pursued. The northern ancestry of Abd al-Rahman III through his mother and his paternal grandmother is well attested in the tradition and in the modern literature. The description of the Maliki establishment in ninth-century al-Andalus and of the mosque-attached elementary school is drawn from the standard reference accounts and is paraphrased. The comparison with canon 65 of the Fourth Council of Toledo (633), *iudaei aut hi qui ex iudaeis sunt*, and with the Visigothic conciliar apparatus more generally, is from the companion study of the Visigothic kingdom, where the Latin is quoted from public-domain texts. The account of formation as the installation of a framework in childhood, of deference attaching to the office rather than the man, and of costly display as the cue that certifies sincerity, follows the framework's own paper on the subject and the cognitive literature it credits.

MODULE 5

A Dinar a Head, and Half for a Slave

The cost column — what compliance cost the ordinary man of al-Andalus, what it bought him, what refusal cost the suburb of al-Rabad, and the three doors he could leave by.

The difficulty, stated first

Almost nothing survives that was written by or for the people this module is about. There is no Andalusi peasant's letter, no village cartulary, no estate account, no tax register from the emirate. The men who wrote were jurists, courtiers, chroniclers and bishops, and when the cultivator appears in their pages he appears as a rate, a category, or a casualty figure.

So the ledger has to be reconstructed indirectly: from the law that fixed what he owed, from the schedules preserved in capitulation texts, from the moments when he stopped complying and someone wrote down what happened next, from the destinations of the people who left, and from what has been dug up. That is a weaker evidentiary base than the previous modules rested on, and the conclusions here are correspondingly held more loosely. Where the reconstruction is an inference it is marked as one.

Who he was

The first correction is that there was no single ordinary man in al-Andalus, and the differences between his varieties are the substance of the ledger.

There was the Christian cultivator of the Guadalquivir and the Ebro, working land his family had worked before 711 under a proprietor who might be the same family as before or might be a Syrian regiment's assignee. There was the *muwallad* smallholder — a convert or a convert's grandson — legally a Muslim, socially suspect to the Arab families, and by the ninth century numerous enough to be the demographic centre of gravity. There was the Berber of the marches and the uplands, whose ancestors had done most of the conquering and had received the worst of the land. There was the urban artisan of Córdoba, Seville, Toledo or Zaragoza, in a city growing faster than anything in western Europe. There was the Jewish craftsman and trader, in communities that had come out of the Visigothic seventh century into something incomparably better. And there was the slave, of whom there were a great many.

Cutting across all of these, the ledger for a woman was a different ledger, because the rules that governed marriage, children and inheritance assigned her a different set of options and a different set of risks, and because in a mixed household the contest over the children ran through her.

What compliance cost

The fiscal architecture is known in its legal form and poorly known in its actual operation, and the two must be kept apart.

In its legal form the system was a differential. A protected non-Muslim owed the *jizya*, a poll tax on adult males, assessed by capacity to pay, in exchange for protection and for exemption from military service. He also owed *kharaj* on his land, a produce tax whose rate varied with the land's quality and irrigation and which in the classical schemes could run from a fifth to a half of the yield. A Muslim owed *zakat*, an alms levy conventionally a fortieth of accumulated wealth, and, on land classified as tithe land, *ushr*, a tenth.

The one concrete Andalusi schedule is the one preserved in the capitulation made with Theodemir in 713, and its terms are worth restating in the shape they take as a bill rather than as a treaty. Each man paid annually one gold dinar, together with fixed measures of wheat, barley, grape juice, vinegar, honey and oil; and a slave paid half.

That last clause is the whole module in five words. The ledger had rows, and the rows were priced differently, and everybody in the arrangement knew which row he was in.

Two qualifications matter and both cut against a simple reading. First, conversion removed the *jizya* but did not, under the developed law, automatically reclassify *kharaj* land as tithe land — a point which caused a fiscal crisis in the eastern caliphate in the eighth century and which meant that the state stood to lose much less from a convert than is usually assumed. Second, and more important for the man paying, the canonical taxes were not the whole bill. Andalusi rulers levied non-canonical exactions — extraordinary contributions, market dues, and labour services — and the evidence that these were heavy is that the jurists kept condemning them, which is not something a legal class does about a levy nobody is complaining of. The rebellion of 818 was, on the accounts that survive, a rising against fiscal pressure and forced labour, not against the poll tax.

So the honest summary of the cost side is: a known, fixed, annual charge that was a real burden and was survivable, plus an unknown and variable additional charge that was resented enough to produce urban revolt, plus, for the *dhimmi*, a per-head levy that priced his religion at a rate he was reminded of once a year for his whole life.

What it bought

This has to be set out honestly, because a ledger with nothing in the credit column explains nothing. Populations do not comply for three centuries out of inertia.

It bought an end to a particular kind of danger. The Visigothic state of the seventh century had used its apparatus to persecute a religious minority with a persistence that is startling to read: compulsory baptism, signed abjurations kept on file, children removed, and finally a decree of enslavement, re-legislated at council after council for eighty years. Whatever else the new order was, it did not do that. A Jew in tenth-century Córdoba was in a position his great-great-grandfather in Toledo would have regarded as deliverance. A Christian was left to his creed on payment of a fee. That is not tolerance in the modern sense and this study will not call it that; it is a fiscal arrangement with a religious boundary. But as a change in a man's exposure to his own government it was very large.

It bought law that worked. Protected communities kept their own courts for internal matters, and the *qadi*'s court was available and was used — including, on the evidence of the jurists' own complaints about it, by non-Muslims who preferred its outcomes to their own community's. A court a subject population uses voluntarily is a real good, and it is the kind that shows up in a ledger.

It bought security of the interior, unevenly. The frontier was violent and the marches were raided from both directions for three centuries. But the Guadalquivir valley under the emirate and caliphate was not a war zone, the roads carried trade, and a silver coinage of consistent fineness circulated across the whole territory — which is worth more to a smallholder selling a surplus than any amount of rhetoric.

And it bought, on the current reading of the evidence, a better-fed country. The Andalusi centuries saw an expansion of irrigation — channel systems, water-lifting wheels, the terraced and irrigated market gardens around the cities — and the naturalisation of crops that had not been grown in the peninsula before, among them hard wheat, rice, sugar cane, citrus and cotton. The strong version of this thesis, which treats it as an agricultural revolution transmitted wholesale through the Islamic world, has been substantially challenged: the critics argue that several of the crops were present earlier, that the diffusion was slower and patchier than claimed, and that Roman irrigation was more extensive than the thesis allows. What survives the criticism is still substantial — more land under water, more crops in the rotation, and cities of a size the peninsula had not supported since antiquity, which cannot be fed by an unchanged countryside.

And for one particular kind of man, compliance bought something much larger, though the evidence is thinner than one would like. The late Roman and Visigothic

countryside had a large tied population — *coloni* bound to estates, and outright slaves — and the legal machinery that bound them was the machinery of the state that fell in 711. Islamic law did not recognise the enserfment of a free Muslim. A tied cultivator who converted was, in principle, a free man of the ruling confession, and the inference that this was understood at the time and acted upon is strong even though the documentation is not. If that is right, then for the bottom of the rural population the offer on the table was not a tax rebate. It was manumission at the price of a sentence.

What refusal cost

The other column was demonstrated rather than described, which is how these things are usually done: once, thoroughly, in a place everybody could see.

On 25 March 818 the southern suburb of Córdoba, across the Guadalquivir — al-Rabad, the Secunda of the Roman road — rose against the emir al-Hakam I. The rising came from merchants, artisans and *muwallads*, and it had the backing of a body of Maliki jurists who had been in conflict with the emir for years; the grievances reported are fiscal pressure and forced labour. For a few hours it threatened the palace.

The suppression is one of the most exactly punitive acts in this study. The suburb was stormed by the emir's paid troops, then demolished — physically levelled, and its ground ordered to be left unbuilt. Around three hundred of the notables and jurists were crucified. And the surviving population, a figure given in the sources at ten thousand and in some accounts at twenty thousand, was expelled from al-Andalus altogether.

Note the composition of the punishment. Not a fine, not a garrison, not a round of executions alone. The removal of a neighbourhood from the map, the ritual killing of its intellectual leadership in public, and the deportation of everyone else. It is addressed to the survivors, and to the other suburbs, and to the next generation. The emir did not need to do it again.

Nor was it isolated. Al-Hakam had already dealt with Toledo around 797 by inviting its notables to a banquet and killing them, an episode the tradition calls the Day of the Ditch. Toledo revolted again in 852 and was besieged; Mérida was disciplined with an internal fortress in 835. The standard penalty for a rebel of standing was crucifixion, and the state used it on Muslims and Christians alike, on the corpse of Ibn Hafsun in 928 as on the jurists of al-Rabad in 818.

Against this, and it is the whole point of putting the two columns side by side, a man who paid his dinar and kept his head down was in very little danger from the state at all. The violence in al-Andalus was intense, localised, and reserved for people who had done something. It was not ambient.

The man who collected it

One figure from the reign of al-Hakam I deserves his own paragraph, because he is the fiscal counterpart of what the previous module found in the Church.

The head of the Christian community of Córdoba in that period was a man the sources call the *comes* Rabi, son of Theodulf — a Visigothic name, a Roman title, a Christian, and the leader of his people before the emir. He commanded a body of the emir's guard. And he was the emir's tax collector. He was eventually removed and crucified for corruption.

An order that has to extract from a subject community has a choice about the interface. It can send its own officers, which is expensive, conspicuous, and produces a clear enemy for the community to hate. Or it can appoint the community's own leader and let him do it, which is cheap, and which means the resentment generated by the extraction attaches in the first instance to him. Córdoba took the second course, and it is exactly what it did with the bishops in 852: the community's own authority structure, left standing and even strengthened, doing the state's work on the state's behalf, and absorbing the hostility.

When the arrangement failed, it failed him and not the emir. He was crucified, and the office continued.

The three doors

The framework's question about compliance is not only what it cost but whether the man had anywhere else to go. Here he had three places, and they were of radically different price.

The first door was north. It was real, it was continuously used for three centuries, and the receiving end actively recruited. Christians left al-Andalus for the Asturian and Leonese kingdoms in a steady trickle that thickened at moments of pressure — clergy and monks conspicuously, but also families — and the northern kings settled them on the expanding frontier and endowed their monasteries. The buildings survive and are dated: San Miguel de Escalada in León in 913, Santiago de Peñalba around 937, and others, put up by southerners and carrying, in their arches and their ornament, the visual habits of the country they had left.

Two qualifications. The old picture of a Duero valley emptied by the conquest and then refilled by refugees is an Asturian court's claim to a territory, and the archaeology has substantially undermined it; the migration was real but it was not a demographic transfer. And the door was expensive: it meant abandoning land, kin, and a functioning economy for a poor frontier at war.

The second door was up. The mountains of the south and the fastnesses of the marches were beyond effective reach, and men who could not live with the arrangement went there and lived by raiding it. That is what Bobastro was, and Ibn Hafsun held it for nearly forty years. It was a real option for a man with a following. For a man without one it was banditry with a short life expectancy.

The third door required no movement at all. A man could stop being a *dhimmi* in the time it takes to say a sentence. He kept his house, his land, his village, his family and his trade; what changed was his fiscal category, his legal standing, his eligibility for office and the army, and — this is the part the previous module dealt with — the religion of his children, permanently and irreversibly.

The three doors are not comparable, and the incomparability is the finding. Two of them cost a man everything he had. The third cost him nothing he could count.

And the state did not stand in the way of the third. It could not: the door was theologically obligatory to leave open, and it was fiscally cheap to leave open, because the convert kept paying land tax and became liable for military service. The order lost a poll tax and gained a soldier. There was no reason on earth for it to close the door, and it never did.

The slave's ledger

One row in the table has to be entered separately, because al-Andalus ran on slavery on a scale the rest of this module's optimism must not obscure.

Slaves came from everywhere: captives from the annual campaigns against the northern kingdoms, purchases from the trade that brought pagan Central and Eastern Europeans west through Frankish and Italian hands, Vikings selling Christian captives, and the trans-Saharan routes from the south. Both sides of the peninsular frontier held slaves and both observed the convention of not enslaving their co-religionists, which meant the frontier itself was the supply. Women went to domestic service and to concubinage. Men went to labour, to eunuch service, and to the army.

The slave's ledger differed from every other in one respect: he had not chosen it and could not exit it by conversion, since accepting Islam did not manumit anyone. What he had instead was a ladder, and the ladder was real. Manumission was meritorious and common. A concubine who bore her master a child could not be sold and was freed at his death, and her child was free and legitimate and Muslim. And the palace slaves — the *saqaliba* — rose to command regiments, to govern provinces, and by the end of the caliphate to make and unmake rulers, which is a later module's subject and a large part of how the whole thing came apart.

So even here the arrangement offered something, and offered it upward. That is not a defence of it. It is a description of why it was stable: an order in which the very bottom can see a route up is much harder to combine against than one in which it cannot.

The pressure inside the house

The last item in the ledger is not fiscal and it was probably the heaviest.

The conversions this study is tracking did not happen in public. They happened in households, one at a time, and they split them. The evidence for this is indirect but it is consistent: the two most consequential martyrdoms of the 850s were both of young women in divided families — one the daughter of a Muslim father and a Christian mother who raised her secretly in her own faith, denounced by her own brother; the other a convert to Christianity from a Muslim family, hiding from her relatives. Alvarus's complaint of 854 is a complaint about other people's sons. The Christian hierarchy's repudiation of the martyrs split the community along the same line.

A man in that position was not weighing a tax against a creed. He was weighing his father's disapproval against his son's prospects, his neighbours' opinion against his wife's family, and the church he had been baptised in against the school where his boy was learning to read. Social pressure ran in both directions and it was ferocious in both, which is why the process took two hundred years rather than twenty — and why, when it finally moved, it moved through the young.

Reading the ledger against the framework

Five things, and the first is the contribution.

One: there is a third kind of exit and it changes everything downstream. The method asks whether the ruled can leave, and has generally had two answers — territorial exit, which is expensive and rare, and internal exit into ungoverned ground, which is available only to men with followings. Al-Andalus supplies a third: **exit from the burdened category while remaining in place.** The *dhimmi* could cease to be one by an individual act that moved no property, required no travel, needed no accomplices, and cost nothing the state would miss, because the state kept his land tax, his labour and his loyalty and gained a soldier.

The consequence is structural and it explains an absence that ought to be conspicuous. In three centuries there was no Christian peasant revolt in al-Andalus. The subject majority, taxed at a differential rate for their religion, never once combined against the arrangement. That is not because they were content. It is because **a**

grievance that can be resolved individually never accumulates into a collective one. Every man who found the burden intolerable had a private remedy available to him, and every man who took it was one fewer in the aggrieved category — and, having taken it, had joined the other side of the ledger and would not be marching with his former neighbours.

State it as a rule: **where the burdened category is exitable by an individual act that the state welcomes, the state will never face a mass movement of the burdened.** The corollary is the more interesting half. The pressure does not disappear; it relocates. The revolts al-Andalus actually suffered — al-Rabad in 818, the *muwallad* risings of the ninth century, Ibn Hafsun — were led and manned overwhelmingly by people who had *already gone through the door* and were demanding that the promise on the other side be honoured. The order was never seriously attacked by its outsiders. It was repeatedly attacked by its recent insiders. An open door does not buy peace; it converts the opposition's grievance from exclusion into betrayal, and moves the fight inside the walls.

Two: the surveillance test, and it answers the question this study was set. Was the protected-status arrangement cheaper to run than compulsion? Yes, and the proof is the apparatus that was not needed. Set the two orders on this ground side by side. The Visigothic state, having made a boundary that it demanded people cross and then declared uncrossable, needed an archive of signed abjurations, sureties from the converted, the removal of children, bishops assigned as monitors, and the same laws re-enacted at council after council for eighty years. The Cordoban state, against a subject population four or five times larger, needed none of it. **Surveillance is the tell of a boundary that people want to cross and are forbidden to cross.** Where the boundary is one-way and the permitted direction is the one the state prefers, the enforcement cost falls to nothing — and the enforcement that remains is aimed, as it was here, at the tiny number trying to go the wrong way. The forty-eight executions at Córdoba between 850 and 859 look like persecution and are better read as the entire annual cost of policing a wall that almost nobody was trying to climb.

Three: a differential tax on belief is not primarily a revenue instrument. Its function is to put a price on a choice, per head, per year, for a lifetime, in a household with children — and to leave the choice open. Read that way, the *jizya* was less a tax than a standing offer with an annual renewal notice, and its effects belong in the module on formation rather than the module on extraction, because an offer refused by fathers and accepted by their sons produces exactly the delayed, generational curve the evidence shows.

Four: the cost of refusal is paid in demonstrations, not in policing. Al-Hakam I destroyed a suburb of his own capital, crucified three hundred of its notables, and deported its surviving population, in one week in 818. He did not have to do it again. A floor of force that has to be continuously applied is expensive and is failing; a floor that is applied once, spectacularly, in the sight of everybody who matters, and then remembered, is the cheap version. The instruction is to count the demonstrations rather than to measure the garrisons, and to note that the years of apparent quiet after one are not evidence of consent.

Five, and it belongs here as a caution rather than a finding: none of this made the arrangement good, and the credit column in this module is not a verdict. The same order that gave a Jewish family in Córdoba a security their ancestors in Toledo could not have imagined was importing captives from three continents to work in its houses and fight in its armies, and taking them off its own northern frontier every summer. Both columns are real. The reason they can both be real is that they were not describing the same people — which is a sentence this study will have to write again, in stronger terms, at the end.

A note on sources. The evidentiary weakness of this module is stated at its head and is not a formality: there is no surviving fiscal register, estate account or private document from emiral or caliphal al-Andalus, and the ordinary subject is reconstructed here from law, from capitulation schedules, from the record of revolts, and from archaeology. The tax schedule attributed to the Theodemir pact — one dinar per head with fixed measures of produce, half rate for slaves — is transmitted only in late Arabic compilations whose versions disagree on the quantities, as set out in the module on the settlement, and is used here for its structure rather than its arithmetic. The rates given for *kharaj*, *ushr* and *zakat* are those of the classical legal schemes and are not attested for Andalusi practice, which is poorly documented and certainly varied; they are given to show the shape of the differential, not the size of anyone's bill. That conversion removed the *jizya* without necessarily reclassifying *kharaj* land follows the standard accounts of early Islamic fiscal law and of the eighth-century crisis it produced in the East.

The revolt of al-Rabad is dated to March 818; the reported grievances are fiscal exaction and forced labour; the suppression involved the razing of the suburb, the crucifixion of about three hundred notables and jurists, and the mass expulsion of the survivors. The number expelled is given in the literature as ten thousand and as twenty thousand and the range is reported here rather than resolved. The destinations — Fez, where the Andalusian quarter still bears the name, and Alexandria, whence a body of exiles took Crete in the 820s — are well attested, but the identification of the Cretan

conquerors specifically as Rabad exiles has been questioned, since Andalusi corsairs are recorded at Alexandria as early as 798–9 and their leader came from a district well away from Córdoba; that objection is registered. The Day of the Ditch at Toledo is conventionally placed around 797 and its details come from the Arabic tradition at a distance.

The *comes* Rabi son of Theodulf, head of the Christian community of Córdoba, commander in the emir's guard, tax collector, and eventually crucified, is reported from the standard reference accounts and the Arabic tradition behind them; the episode is not traced here to a primary passage and is flagged accordingly. The Mozarab migration northward, the northern kings' recruitment of settlers, and the dated foundations of San Miguel de Escalada (913) and Santiago de Peñalba (c. 937) follow the modern scholarship; the older picture of a Duero valley emptied and repopulated is a topos of the Asturian chronicles which recent archaeology has substantially undermined, and that correction is given on the page. The literature on the term *Mozarab* itself is contested and the word is used here loosely and with that noted.

The account of the agricultural expansion is given with its principal challenge attached: Andrew Watson's thesis of an Islamic agricultural revolution has been contested, notably by Michael Decker, on the grounds that several crops predate the conquest, that diffusion was slower than claimed, and that Roman irrigation was more extensive than allowed; what is asserted here is only the residue that survives that challenge. The inference that conversion offered release from tied status to the servile rural population is marked as an inference; the legal principle is clear and the documentation of its operation in al-Andalus is not. The description of slavery, its supply routes, and the status of the *umm walad* follows the standard accounts and is paraphrased. The martyr cases of Flora and of Leocritia are from Eulogius and Alvarus and are discussed with their evidentiary problems in the module on formation. The comparison with Visigothic anti-Jewish legislation draws on the companion study of the Visigothic kingdom, where the Latin is quoted from public-domain texts.

MODULE 6

The Bells of Santiago

Extraction — what was taken and from whom, the gold road that wrote the caliphate's foreign policy, and the difference between an army paid from land and an army paid from a treasury.

What there is to count with

No fiscal register survives from al-Andalus. Not one. There is no equivalent of the Egyptian papyri, no cadastre, no accounts of a *diwan*, no receipt. Everything that follows about how much was taken rests either on figures preserved in Arabic chronicles written between one and seven centuries after the events, or on inference from what was built and what was paid for.

That has a specific consequence which shapes this module. The figures that survive have the shape of literary figures rather than accountants' figures — round, tripartite, and pleasing. When the tradition says a caliph divided his revenue into three equal parts, the analyst's first question should not be what he did with the money but why the number three keeps appearing. This module therefore uses the transmitted figures for the *proportions* they assert and for what those proportions were meant to convey, and turns for anything harder to two bodies of evidence that were not composed by chroniclers: the coinage, and the buildings.

The instruments

The revenue of the Cordoban state came from six places, and they can be ranked with reasonable confidence even where they cannot be quantified.

The land tax was the largest. It fell on agricultural production, at rates that varied with the quality and irrigation of the land, and it was owed regardless of the cultivator's religion — a convert's land, in the developed law, did not automatically change its fiscal classification, which meant that conversion cost the treasury much less than it appears to. The poll tax on protected non-Muslims was the second, and it declined structurally across the period as the population it fell on shrank. Alms and tithe from Muslims made the third. Market dues, tolls and customs made a fourth, and in a country with Córdoba, Seville, Toledo, Zaragoza and Almería in it, this was not small; a Jewish courtier at Abd al-Rahman III's court, writing to a foreign king, described the caliph's income from the merchants who came from various countries and islands as though it were the item worth boasting of. The mint made a fifth. And the sixth was war.

Alongside these ran the exactions the law did not authorise: extraordinary levies, market impositions, and forced labour. Their weight can be measured only by the noise they generated, and the noise was considerable — the jurists condemned them repeatedly, and the rising that destroyed a suburb of Córdoba in 818 was, on the accounts that survive, a rising against fiscal pressure and corvée rather than against any canonical tax.

Collection was done, wherever possible, by somebody who was not a state officer. Tax farming was normal; and, as the previous module noted, the head of the Christian community of Córdoba under al-Hakam I was also the emir's tax collector. A state that can arrange for a subject community's own leader to take its money has bought itself the cheapest possible collection service, because the resentment attaches to him first.

The third, the third, and the third

The transmitted account of what Abd al-Rahman III did with his revenue is that he divided it in three: one part covered the ordinary expenses of government, one part was hoarded in the treasury, and one part went on building.

Treat the arithmetic as a literary form and the proportions as an assertion about what a great ruler's finances ought to look like. But the third item has a physical residue, and it can be walked over.

In 936 Abd al-Rahman III began Madinat al-Zahra, a palace city on the slope above Córdoba: terraced on three levels, walled, with its own mosque, mint, barracks, gardens, workshops and administrative offices. He moved the government into it around 945. The tradition reports ten thousand workmen and three thousand animals, and construction continuing under his son for a quarter-century and more. It also reports that a third of the state's annual revenue went into it for years at a stretch.

Note the object. It is not a fortress, and it is not infrastructure. It is a purpose-built seat of government physically separated from the city it governed, at a distance of some five kilometres, entered through controlled gates, arranged so that a visitor climbed through descending ranks of officials to reach a caliph he might not be permitted to look at directly. The famous set-pieces of the tenth-century court — the reception of foreign embassies, the graded ranks of guards lining the road — are staged in a building designed to stage them.

An order that spends a third of its revenue for twenty-five years on a machine for being looked at is telling you something about where it thought its danger lay. It did not build fortifications on that scale. It built a place from which to be seen correctly by people whose opinion mattered, and the people whose opinion mattered were the

Muslim elite of al-Andalus, the client rulers of the Maghrib, and the ambassadors of Byzantium and the Frankish kingdoms.

And its end is as informative as its cost. Both Madinat al-Zahra and the second palace city that al-Mansur built for himself, Madinat al-Zahira, were sacked and destroyed in the civil war that began in 1009, within a lifetime of their completion. A century of the state's discretionary surplus was in those two sites, and it was gone in a few years.

The gold road

Here the coinage gives a harder answer than any chronicle, and it is the most important structural fact in this module.

Al-Andalus had silver of its own and struck dirhams throughout. It did not have gold. Gold reached the western Mediterranean along the trans-Saharan caravan routes from West Africa, and the northern terminus of the western route was Sijilmasa, on the desert edge of what is now Morocco — some fifteen hundred miles from Córdoba, in a place no Cordoban ruler ever governed directly.

Follow the dates. Gold coinage in al-Andalus had effectively lapsed since the 740s. In 927 Abd al-Rahman III took Melilla; in 931 Ceuta; in 951 Tangier — the ports controlling the traffic between the peninsula and the North African interior. He resumed striking gold in 929, the year he took the caliphal title. Through the middle decades of the century Córdoba and the Fatimids of Ifriqiya fought a long proxy contest for the Maghrib, in which each subsidised Berber clients, sent them coin and banners, and financed the mosques of the towns they wanted held; Córdoba paid for work on the great mosque of Fez, which is a cheap way of buying a city. In 958 to 960 a Fatimid army took Fez and occupied Sijilmasa, and had the mint there strike in the Fatimid caliph's name. Later in the century the Umayyads got it back through their Zanata clients and struck there themselves.

And the numismatic literature reports that the alternating periods of gold minting by the two powers correlate with which of them controlled Sijilmasa.

That correlation is the finding, and it reframes what the tenth-century North African policy was. It is usually presented as a struggle for prestige between two caliphates, or as a defensive response to Fatimid expansion, and both of those are true. But underneath the doctrinal contest was a contest for a caravan terminus, and the party that held it could strike gold and the party that did not could not. The caliphal title of 929 and the resumption of the gold dinar are not two events. They are one event with two faces, and the rival who provoked the first was competing for the metal that made the second possible.

An order whose currency rests on an imported metal does not choose its foreign policy. Its mint chooses it.

The summer campaign, and what it was for

The sixth revenue stream was war against the northern kingdoms, and by the end of the period it had become structurally necessary rather than optional.

The annual expedition — the *ṣā'ifa* — ran, with interruptions, for most of the emirate and caliphate. It rarely produced permanent territorial gain. It reliably produced plunder and captives. Under al-Mansur, who ruled as chamberlain in the name of a caliph he had reduced to a figurehead from 978 to 1002, it became relentless: the tradition counts something over fifty campaigns in twenty-four years, taking Zamora in 981, Barcelona in 985, Coimbra in 987, and Santiago de Compostela in 997.

At Santiago he destroyed the town and the basilica and — on the tradition — had the cathedral's bells carried back to Córdoba on the shoulders of Christian captives, to be hung in the great mosque as lamps.

That object is the whole module in one image, and the temptation is to read it as a symbol. It is better read as an invoice. The bells were loot. The men who carried them were loot. The campaign that took them was announced as the defence of the faith and functioned as the payment of an army; and the reason it had to be annual, and had to succeed, is set out in the next section.

The captives are the part of the extraction that appears in no revenue figure. Al-Andalus enslaved on a large scale and from several directions: its own frontier campaigns, purchase from the Frankish and Italian intermediaries who moved pagan Europeans west and south, Viking sellers, and the trans-Saharan routes. It was both a destination and a transit market, and the trade in eunuchs in particular ran through it. None of that is in the tripartite division of the caliph's revenue, because it was not the state's revenue; it was private wealth and military manpower, generated by the state's campaigns and taxed on the way past.

The rule this suggests is general. Where a state's frontier is also its slave supply, its wars will be renewed whatever the strategic situation, because a peace has costs that do not appear on any account.

Two ways to pay an army

Now the change that decided the outcome, and it is a change in a single administrative variable.

In 743 the Syrian regiments were settled on the land: each *jund* assigned to a named district and given a third of that district's tax revenue, in exchange for collecting it and for military service. That is an army paid from the ground it stands on. It has three properties. It cannot be disbanded, because disbanding it would mean confiscating the revenue assignment that is its livelihood. It is loyal in the first instance to its own regiment, its own province and its own faction, because that is where its income is. And it is structurally cheap for the central treasury, which never handles the money.

For two and a half centuries that army was the state's chronic disease. It fought itself in the 740s, let Abd al-Rahman I into the country in 755 because one faction wanted the other beaten, and provided the factional material for every subsequent civil war. Every ruler from Abd al-Rahman I onward tried to work around it: al-Hakam I built a paid palace guard, Abd al-Rahman III brought in slave soldiers of eastern European origin as a third element that belonged to neither Arab nor Berber faction, and the militia of Córdoba and hired Berbers took an increasing share of the fighting.

In 991 al-Mansur finished it. He abolished the *junds* as units, broke up the regiments organised by tribe and province, and reorganised the army by function and weapon. He recruited on a large scale from the Berbers of the Maghrib and from slave and Christian mercenaries. What emerged was a professional standing army with no provincial base, no tribal command structure, and no source of income except the treasury.

Consider what that bought and what it cost.

It bought control. An army with no landed income cannot use its income against you, and one whose units are mixed cannot combine along the lines it was recruited on. Al-Mansur ruled al-Andalus for twenty-four years without a serious internal challenge, which no ruler before him had managed, and he did it with a caliph in a palace who was allowed no function at all. On the measure of central authority, the reform was a complete success.

It cost the whole thing. An army paid in cash belongs to whoever has the cash, and only for as long as he has it. The reform also created a permanent and enormous recurring expense, which is precisely why the campaigns had to be annual and had to be profitable: the plunder was the payroll. And it removed the one thing that had, for two hundred and fifty years, held the army in the country regardless of who was in charge — a stake in the land.

Al-Mansur died in 1002. His son held the position until 1008. In 1009 the arrangement collapsed, and the Berber troops and the palace slaves who had been imported to be loyal to a paymaster went looking for one, then for plunder, then for territory. The mercenaries who were no longer being paid did what unpaid mercenaries

do. Both palace cities were destroyed. The caliphate formally survived to 1031 and was, from 1009, a name that rival soldiers fought over.

Eighteen years from the reform to the collapse. That sequence is the subject of the module on change and collapse and will be handled properly there. It belongs here because its cause is fiscal and administrative rather than military, and because the decision that produced it was taken for excellent reasons by a highly competent man who could see the problem he was solving and could not see the one he was creating.

Reading extraction against the framework

Four things.

One, and it is the contribution: **the mode by which an army is paid determines whose army it is, and the two modes fail in opposite ways.** An army paid from assigned land is a chronic condition — it cannot be dissolved, it belongs to its province and its faction, it mutinies over shares, and it will produce civil wars at intervals for as long as the order lasts. An army paid in cash from a central treasury is an acute condition — it belongs entirely to whoever holds the keys, which is an enormous gain in control, and it stops belonging to anybody the moment the keys are lost.

This is the second half of a pair the study opened with. The first module distinguished the summoned floor, which fails by non-attendance and dies in a single battle, from the stipendiary floor, which fails by mutiny and dies slowly. This module splits the second category: **a stipendiary floor paid in land and a stipendiary floor paid in coin are not the same machine.** The Andalusi state ran the first for two hundred and fifty years, suffering repeated but survivable convulsions, and converted to the second in 991 for the excellent reason that the convulsions were intolerable. The conversion worked exactly as intended and then killed the state in eighteen years.

The diagnostic follows directly: **date the moment an order shifts its army from land to cash, and expect its terminal crisis to be a fiscal one rather than a military one, within a generation or two.** The army will not be defeated. It will simply be unpaid, and unpaid soldiers in a rich country do not go home.

Two: **where an army must be paid in coin and the domestic base will not cover it, the state acquires a structural requirement for war, and its stated reasons for fighting will not be its reasons.** Al-Mansur's fifty-odd campaigns were announced, and by many were sincerely understood, as the defence of Islam against the unbeliever; the razing of the shrine at Santiago in 997 and the bells hung in the mosque at Córdoba were a religious statement of unmistakable clarity. They were also the payroll, and they had to happen every year and had to be profitable, which is not a property religious duties normally have. The general instruction: where a sacred obligation must be

discharged annually and must produce plunder, read the payroll first and the piety second — and note that this does not make the piety insincere. The men who carried the bells north believed what they said. The campaign was still the payroll.

Three: **a state whose currency rests on an imported metal has its foreign policy written by its mint.** Córdoba's gold came from a caravan terminus fifteen hundred miles away in territory it never ruled, and its acquisitions of Melilla in 927, Ceuta in 931 and Tangier in 951, its long subsidised proxy war against the Fatimids for the Maghrib, and the resumption of its gold coinage in the same year it claimed the caliphate, are one connected operation. The numismatic record shows the two rivals' gold issues alternating with control of Sijilmasa. This sharpens rather than replaces the earlier finding that the robe faces the competitor: the competitor was competing for the same metal, so the doctrinal contest and the material contest were the same contest, and neither reading is complete without the other. The general test is cheap — identify what a state's coinage is physically made of and where that substance comes from, and much of what looks like ideology in its external policy will resolve into a supply line.

Four: **the extraction that subsidises an order is often not in its accounts, because it is taken from people the accounts do not cover.** The transmitted figures for Cordoban revenue are domestic: land, heads, markets, tolls. They do not include the captives taken every summer off the northern frontier, the tribute extracted from the Christian kingdoms, or the human beings moved through al-Andalus from northern and eastern Europe and from across the Sahara to markets further east. That flow financed households, manned armies, and staffed a palace, and it is invisible in every number this module has been able to quote. A ledger that balances is not therefore a full account of what an order lived on; the question to ask of any such ledger is who is outside the frame, and whether the order's frontier is also its supply.

A note on sources. No fiscal register, cadastre or account survives from emiral or caliphal al-Andalus, and this module says so at its head rather than in its notes; every quantitative statement below is either a chronicler's figure at a great distance or an inference from physical remains. The tripartite division of Abd al-Rahman III's revenue — one third for the ordinary expenses of government, one third hoarded, one third on building — is transmitted in the Arabic tradition and reproduced in the older reference literature; the figure of a third of annual revenue spent on Madinat al-Zahra, and the reported ten thousand workmen and three thousand animals, come from the same tradition. The schematic tidiness of these numbers is flagged on the page and no argument here depends on their accuracy. The remark of Hasdai ibn Shaprut about the caliph's income from foreign merchants is from the Khazar correspondence, whose

authenticity and transmission are themselves debated; it is used only as an indication of what a courtier thought worth boasting of, and is not quoted.

The dates for the North African acquisitions — Melilla 927, Ceuta 931, Tangier 951 — the Fatimid campaigns in the western Maghreb of 958–960 under Jawhar and Ziri ibn Manad which took Fez and Sijilmasa, and the Umayyad subsidy of building work at the Qarawiyyin mosque in Fez, follow the modern scholarship and are paraphrased. The observation that Umayyad and Fatimid gold minting alternates with control of Sijilmasa is from the numismatic literature on the trans-Saharan gold trade and is the strongest single piece of evidence in this module, because it is metallurgical and archaeological rather than narrative; recent isotopic work on the sourcing of Sijilmasa gold is consistent with it. The resumption of Andalusi gold coinage in 929, bearing the caliph's name and titles, is attested in the catalogued issues.

Al-Mansur's rule as chamberlain from 978 to 1002, his abolition of the tribally and provincially organised *junds* in 991 and their replacement by units organised by function, his large-scale recruitment of Maghribi Berbers, slave soldiers and Christian mercenaries, and the campaign record including Zamora 981, Barcelona 985, Coimbra 987 and Santiago de Compostela 997, follow the standard reference accounts, which differ on details and on the number of campaigns; the figure of somewhat over fifty is the conventional one and is not independently checkable. The carrying of the bells of Santiago to Córdoba on the shoulders of captives, to serve as lamps in the great mosque, is transmitted in both the Arabic and the Christian traditions and is reported here as transmitted. Estimates of army size in this period range from thirty to fifty thousand under Abd al-Rahman III and, for al-Mansur, from figures in the hundreds of thousands in the older tradition down to fifty to ninety thousand in the modern literature; the range is given rather than a number. The destruction of Madinat al-Zahra and Madinat al-Zahira in the civil war after 1009, and the behaviour of unpaid mercenaries in that war, are well attested and are treated properly in the module on collapse. Modern scholarship consulted and paraphrased rather than quoted includes Hugh Kennedy on the emirate and caliphate and the standard accounts of Andalusi military organisation and of the western Maghrib in the tenth century; where those accounts disagree, the disagreement is reported.

MODULE 7

Sell Me Your Soul

Information and suppression — the letter the caliph could not be allowed to hear, the two literacies that shared a city and never met, and the twenty years in which nobody could establish whether the caliph was alive.

Two literacies, one country

The most important fact about information in al-Andalus is not a policy. It is a structural condition that nobody designed and nobody had to maintain.

From the early eighth century the peninsula contained two literate cultures occupying the same cities, using two scripts, storing their traditions in two languages, and largely unable to read each other. The Arabic culture produced court annals, jurisprudence, poetry, genealogy, astronomy and medicine, and it is the source of nearly everything now known about the emirate and the caliphate. The Latin culture produced chronicles, martyrologies, liturgy, polemic and canon law, and it is the source of nearly everything now known about the Christians who lived under those rulers.

The two bodies of writing barely acknowledge one another. The martyr movement at Córdoba in the 850s, which fills the Latin literature of its generation and has been written about ever since, receives a fraction of the attention in the Arabic historiography that its prominence in the Latin sources would lead one to expect. Conversely, the Latin writers of al-Andalus have almost nothing to say about the internal politics of the emirate that governed them — no account of the succession, the factions, the fiscal disputes or the campaigns, all of which they were living inside.

The framework's usual object here is a *seam*: a deliberately maintained gap between what one audience is told and what another experiences, requiring management, staff and cost. This case has a seam that cost nothing at all, because it was made of the alphabet. No state had to prevent the Christian villages of the Guadalquivir from reading the caliph's chancery; they could not have read it if it had been nailed to their doors. And nothing had to be done to keep the Arabic-reading elite from following what was said in the Latin monasteries.

That is a very cheap arrangement. The rest of this module is largely about what it cost anyway.

The letter that could not be heard

In 953 Otto, then king of the Germans, sent an embassy to Córdoba under a Lotharingian monk, John of Gorze. The account of what happened was written up perhaps twenty-five years later by John of Saint-Arnoul, in the life of John of Gorze; the Latin was edited by Pertz for the *Monumenta* in 1841 and reprinted in the *Acta Sanctorum*, and is out of copyright. It is the single best document in this study for how information moved, because it is written by an outsider who had to have the local rules explained to him and who wrote the explanation down.

The embassy carried a letter. Somebody at Córdoba learned, before it was delivered, what was in it, and the palace's leading men held a meeting to work out whether the caliph had already heard. Their reason is set out in the text:

> *Lex enim tam improvocabilis eos constringit, ut quod semel antiquitus omni ei genti praefixum est, nullo unquam liceat modo dissolvi, parique modo Rex populusque tenentur innexi, omnisque transgressio gladio feritur. Si quid ab inferioribus Rex, si quid Rex ipse commiserit, cunctus in eum populus animadvertit. Eis in legibus primum dirumque est, ne quis in religionem eorum quid unquam audeat loqui: civis sit vel extraneus, nulla intercedente redemptione, capite plectitur.*
> *"For a law so unappealable binds them that what was once laid down of old for that whole people may never in any way be dissolved; and king and people are held bound in it alike, and every transgression is struck with the sword. If an inferior has committed something, or if the king himself has committed it, the whole people takes note against him. First and most terrible in their laws is this: that no one should ever dare to say anything against their religion — be he citizen or stranger, with no ransom intervening, he is beheaded."*

The problem the palace faced, on this account, was not that the letter was offensive. It was that the caliph must not be permitted to *hear* it, because hearing it would oblige him to execute the ambassador, and failing to execute the ambassador would put the caliph himself in breach before his own people.

So the letter was not delivered, and the embassy was not received, and John of Gorze was housed in Córdoba and left there. He stayed roughly three years.

The palace tried to solve it by finding somebody who could talk to him. It sent, according to the tradition, the Jewish courtier Hasdai ibn Shaprut, who managed the caliph's foreign business and whose intelligence John recorded himself as never having seen equalled. It also sent, on the account in the life, a Mozarab bishop — a Christian

of the caliph's own subject population — to urge the monk to suppress the letter. John refused.

That refusal is worth registering as a datum in its own right. The Christian hierarchy of al-Andalus, which had been used in 852 to discipline the martyrs, was used again a century later to manage a foreign embassy, and on both occasions it did what the palace asked. What it could not do was compel a foreigner who was outside its jurisdiction and had not been formed inside its arrangement.

Sell me your soul

The deadlock was broken by finding the only kind of person who could break it, and the passage describing him is the heart of this module.

The palace decided that the answer was to send an embassy of its own to Otto, asking for a different letter. It then had to find somebody willing to go. The text says the offer was open — any honour asked for, gifts of any kind, on return — and that hardly anyone would come forward. Then:

> *tandem extitit inter Palatina officia Recemundus quidam, adprime Catholicus, et litteris optime tam nostrorum quam ipsius, inter quos versabatur, linguae Arabicae, instructus. Qui tantum in regia habebat officii, ut diversorum pro necessitatibus ad palatium concurrentium caussis extra auditis, quia litteris omnes ibi querimoniae vel causae signantur et resignantur, hic notata inferret, itidemque responsa scripta referret: pluresque eidem alii erant officio delegati.*
> *"at length there came forward from among the palace offices a certain Recemundus, thoroughly Catholic, and excellently instructed in the letters both of our people and of the Arabic tongue of those among whom he moved. He held such a post in the palace that, the suits of the various people gathering at the palace for their needs having been heard outside — since there all complaints and cases are set down and released in writing — he would carry the notes in, and likewise carry the written answers back out; and several others were assigned to the same office."*

That is the seam, staffed and described. A Christian, bilingual in Latin and Arabic, whose entire function was to carry written petitions from the subject population into the palace and written decisions back out — and the text notes that there were several men doing it, so it was an established department, not an improvisation.

And then the price. The author explains a formula used at Córdoba when a man is sent on a mission of extreme danger — the manuscript is damaged at this point and the reading is partly conjectural, but the phrase itself is clear:

Vende mihi animam tuam
"Sell me your soul."

If he came back alive, the text says, he was rewarded most amply.

Recemundus sold his. He went north, obtained the replacement letter, and returned. He was made a bishop — of Elvira, on the usual identification — and continued in the caliph's service, travelling on further embassies. A few years later, in 961, his name is attached to one of the most remarkable objects produced in tenth-century Spain: a calendar of the year, existing in Arabic and Latin versions and associated with him and with the Muslim scholar Arib ibn Sa'd, dedicated to the caliph, setting out the agricultural year, the seasons, the saints' days and the Christian feasts together.

One book, at the very top of the state, in which the two literacies of al-Andalus actually meet — produced by the one man in the record who had been formally employed to cross between them. It is the exception, and it is the size of the exception that measures the rule.

What the state could see, and what it could not

The apparatus of surveillance in al-Andalus was, by the standards of this collection, modest, and its shape follows from what has just been described.

There was a postal and intelligence service inherited from the eastern caliphate, carrying despatches between the capital and the provinces. There was a city prefect and a police force at Córdoba, and the standard Islamic office of market inspector, whose remit was weights, measures, adulteration and public morals in the streets — an office of continuous, low-level, visible supervision of the marketplace, which is real surveillance and should not be discounted. There were informers, and there were spectacular punishments when they produced results, as at Toledo in the 790s and at al-Rabad in 818.

What there was not was any apparatus for looking inside the subject population. And the consequence is visible at the one moment when the state urgently needed to.

When the martyrdoms began in 851, the emir's first move was to arrest the Christian clergy — which is what a government does when it has no idea who is organising something and reaches for the only names it has. His second, and the one that worked, was to order the bishops to convene a council and deal with it themselves. He did not investigate. He delegated the investigation to the community under investigation, because he had no other instrument that could operate inside it.

That is the price of the free seam. A gap maintained by mutual illegibility costs the ruler nothing to maintain and blinds him as thoroughly as it blinds his subjects. He does not need to suppress what they say, because he cannot hear it; and he cannot hear it when he needs to.

Who wrote the record

One further consequence deserves stating plainly, because it conditions this entire study.

The history of the emirate and the caliphate was written at court. The Razi family served as official annalists across generations; their work is largely lost and survives through later quotation, above all in the eleventh-century compilation of Ibn Hayyan, which is itself preserved only in part. What that means is that the narrative of Umayyad al-Andalus available to any modern reader descends, at one or two removes, from the record kept by the dynasty's own historians in the dynasty's own palace.

There is no independent Muslim chronicle of the emirate written outside the court, and no surviving archive against which to check it. The rebels are described by the men who defeated them. Ibn Hafsun is an apostate and a bandit in this literature because that is how the winning side classified him; the classification may be right, and it is also the only one preserved.

Against that stands the Latin material, which is independent, hostile, and — this is the point — almost entirely uninterested in the questions the Arabic record answers. So the two bodies of evidence do not check each other. They describe different countries.

Six burnings

Public destruction of books occurred repeatedly in al-Andalus and the Maghrib — a recent study counts six public burnings under five regimes between the tenth century and the twelfth — and the two that fall within this study's period tell the same story about what such an act is for.

Around 961, the writings of Ibn Masarra were burned. He was a Cordoban mystic and philosopher who had died thirty years earlier and whose followers the jurists of Córdoba had identified as a danger; the caliph, who had recently taken a title announcing himself as the defender of God's religion, performed the role.

The second is larger and more revealing. Al-Hakam II, who ruled from 961 to 976, assembled at Córdoba the greatest library in the western world — the traditional figure of four hundred thousand volumes is certainly inflated and is quoted here as tradition,

not as a count — with agents buying books across the East. When he died, leaving an eleven-year-old heir, his chamberlain al-Mansur took power and needed the Maliki jurists, who controlled legal authority and public morality and had never been comfortable with the caliph's collection. Al-Mansur gave them the library. A commission of their representatives went through it and removed what they judged dangerous, and it was burned.

The selection is the evidence. What went were the works of ancient science — philosophy, logic, astronomy, geometry. What stayed were the religious texts. That is not a theological verdict on a body of knowledge; it is a transaction, in which a usurper bought the endorsement of the one constituency whose disapproval could have destroyed him, and paid in a currency that cost him personally nothing, since he had no interest in the books. He also, by the same account, copied out a Qur'an in his own hand.

And there is a coda that joins this module to the one on extraction. When Córdoba was besieged in the civil war after 1009, the governor of the city, having no money to pay his mercenaries, sold off part of what remained of the library. The books that survived the jurists were liquidated to make the payroll.

The caliph who could not be found

The last section is the most extraordinary information failure in this study, and it happened at the very centre.

Hisham II became caliph in 976 at the age of ten. From 978 until 1002 the state was run by al-Mansur as chamberlain, and Hisham was kept in the palace, produced for ceremonies, and allowed no function. The coinage carried his name. The Friday sermon carried his name. Twenty-four years of campaigns were conducted in his name. He was, so far as the machinery of legitimation was concerned, the entire warrant for everything that happened — and almost nobody in al-Andalus had ever seen him.

In February 1009 a cousin seized the throne and held Hisham prisoner. In November of the same year another claimant took Córdoba, released him, restored him, and deposed him again within days. He was restored a second time in 1010 and disappeared in 1013. What happened to him is not certainly known; the standard account is that he was killed in 1013, and the reference literature is not entirely consistent even about that.

And in 1033, twenty years later, the ruler of Seville produced a man he said was Hisham II. The claim was that the caliph had never died. Other rulers of the fragmented peninsula — including Mujahid of Denia — accepted his nominal authority and struck their arrangements around it.

Read that sequence as an information event rather than as a political one. A regime had spent a quarter of a century governing in the name of a man it kept out of sight. The name was the state's central fact: whose it was, and whether he lived, determined who could legitimately command anything. When the regime broke, that fact could not be established — not by the population, not by the elite, and evidently not with sufficient authority to prevent a rival prince, two decades later, from producing a substitute and finding takers.

The takers are the interesting part. It is unlikely that the rulers who acknowledged the Sevillian Hisham all believed in him. What they needed was not a true caliph but *a* caliph — a name to coordinate on. And the reason a substitute could serve was that the real one had been reduced to a name long before, by a chamberlain who found it convenient that nobody should see him.

Reading information against the framework

Four things.

One, and it is the contribution: **a seam can be free, and a free seam blinds the ruler as thoroughly as the ruled.** The method's standard seam is an expensive artefact — a deliberately maintained gap between what a distant audience is told and what the governed experience, requiring staff, censorship, doctored despatches and the continuous management of two accounts. Al-Andalus had a seam that required none of that, because the two populations could not read each other's script. Nobody suppressed the Latin literature of the Mozarabs; nobody needed to.

The corollary is what makes this worth stating. **A seam maintained by language rather than by policy is not a management tool, because the ruler cannot open it either.** The caliph's government could not see inside its own subject majority. When it needed to — in 851, when a movement of public suicides began in its capital — it could only reach for the community's own hierarchy and instruct it to handle the matter, which is delegation forced by blindness rather than chosen for economy. The general instruction: where the gap between rulers and ruled is linguistic rather than administrative, expect the ruler to be surprised by his own population, expect him to govern it through intermediaries who can cross, and expect those intermediaries — a bishop, a bilingual clerk, a Jewish physician who handles the foreign correspondence — to become structurally indispensable and structurally suspect at the same time.

Two: **the more strictly an obligation is attached to knowing, the less a ruler will be allowed to know.** The Córdoban palace's problem with Otto's letter was not that its contents were intolerable but that the caliph's *hearing* them would trigger an obligation he could not evade without becoming a transgressor himself, before a law

that bound him exactly as it bound his subjects. The rational response of everyone around him was therefore to ensure the information never arrived, and the result was a three-year deadlock which nobody had chosen and nobody could unilaterally end. This generalises well beyond the case. Wherever a rule states that a sovereign who learns of X must do Y, the court acquires a powerful and permanent interest in the sovereign not learning of X, and the machinery of insulation that grows up around him will be built by his own loyal servants for his own protection.

Three: **a book-burning is a payment, and what was spared identifies the payee.** Al-Mansur purged the caliphal library of philosophy, logic, astronomy and geometry, and left the religious texts alone. He did it in the year he was consolidating an usurpation and needed the Maliki jurists, and he did it by handing them the selection. Read as an intellectual event it is a catastrophe and a mystery; read as a transaction it is entirely legible, and its price was low, because the man paying had no personal use for the goods. The diagnostic is cheap and portable: when an order destroys a body of writing, list what it left standing, and the beneficiary will usually be visible in the gap.

Four: **the terminal symptom is not that the order's central fact is disputed but that it becomes unknowable.** For twenty-four years al-Andalus was governed in the name of a caliph almost nobody had seen. When the arrangement broke in 1009 the whereabouts, authority and eventually the survival of that caliph could not be established; and twenty years later a claimant produced a substitute and other rulers swore to him. An order can survive a contested fact — rival claimants, disputed successions, two kings striking coins, as on this same peninsula in 710. What it cannot survive is the disappearance of any fact to contest, because coordination among elites requires something to coordinate *on*, true or not. That is the bridge to the next module, and the thing to notice now is that the unknowability was manufactured, deliberately, by a competent man solving a different problem: al-Mansur hid the caliph because a hidden caliph could not interfere, and in doing so he dismantled the only object the elite could have rallied to when he was gone.

A note on sources. The Latin quotations are from the *Vita Iohannis Gorziensis*, written by John of Saint-Arnoul around 980, chapters 120 and 128, in the text edited by G. H. Pertz for the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* IV (Hanover, 1841), pp. 337–377, as reprinted in the *Acta Sanctorum*, Februarii tomus III (Paris, 1865); both are in the public domain and the translations are mine. The text was read from a scanned facsimile whose optical transcription is imperfect and which carries lacunae at several points; the passages quoted here were selected because they are legible and continuous, and the formula *vende mihi animam tuam* sits immediately beside a damaged stretch, so that while the phrase itself is clear the clause introducing it is partly

conjectural and is paraphrased rather than quoted. The account is a hagiography written a quarter-century after the events by a man who was not present, and its explanation of Islamic law is a Lotharingian monk's understanding of what he was told at Córdoba, not a statement of the law; it is used here as evidence of how the situation was explained to a foreigner and of what the palace actually did, which are the two things it is well placed to report. Hasdai ibn Shaprut's role in the embassy and John's remark about his intelligence are transmitted in the same source and are reported here from the reference literature rather than quoted. The identification of Recemundus with the bishop of Elvira, and his association with the Latin and Arabic calendar of 961 alongside Arib ibn Saʿd, follow the standard scholarship and carry the usual uncertainties of that identification.

The count of six public book burnings in al-Andalus and the Maghrib between the tenth and twelfth centuries, and the burning of Ibn Masarra's writings around 961, are from Maribel Fierro's study of the politics of book burning, paraphrased and credited; the date for the Ibn Masarra burning is given as 961 in that study and as 952 elsewhere, and the discrepancy is noted. Al-Mansur's purge of al-Hakam II's library — the removal and burning of works of philosophy, logic, astronomy and geometry, the sparing of religious texts, the involvement of a commission of jurists, and the copying of a Qur'an in his own hand — is transmitted in the Arabic tradition, notably in the criticism of Saʿid al-Andalusi, and follows the standard modern accounts. The figure of four hundred thousand volumes for the library is traditional and is quoted as tradition; no reliable count exists. The sale of books by the governor of Córdoba to pay unpaid troops during the siege is reported in the same literature.

The career of Hisham II — caliph from 976, reduced to a figurehead from 978, deposed in February 1009, briefly restored in November 1009, restored again in July 1010 and disappearing in 1013 — follows the standard reference accounts, which are not fully consistent on the manner and date of his death; that inconsistency is itself reported rather than resolved. The production of a claimant to be Hisham II by the ruler of Seville in 1033, and his acknowledgement by Mujahid of Denia and others, follows the same literature. The description of the *barid*, the city prefecture and the office of market inspector is drawn from the standard accounts of Islamic administration and is paraphrased; no Andalusi administrative manual from this period survives. The observation that the martyr movement occupies far less space in the Arabic historiography than in the Latin is a commonplace of the modern scholarship on the episode and is credited to it. The account of the Razi family as court annalists and of Ibn Hayyan's preservation of their work follows the standard accounts of Andalusi historiography; the consequence drawn from it — that the narrative of

Umayyad al-Andalus descends from the dynasty's own record — is this study's, and the reader should weigh everything in the preceding modules accordingly.

MODULE 8

The One Thing He Did Not Take

Elite coordination and the default — why men who loathed one another kept an arrangement running for two hundred and fifty-three years, why the most powerful man in it declined the only prize remaining, and what happened three months after his son asked for it.

Who was actually in the room

An arrangement is not a population. The question in this module is not why the peasant complied — he was priced in an earlier module and he never rose — but why a set of armed, wealthy, mutually hostile men, most of whom had the means to defect and several of whom tried, went on coordinating for a quarter of a millennium to keep one family in a palace at Córdoba.

The blocs can be named, and their mutual dislike was not a matter of temperament.

There was the ruling house itself, the Umayyads of the Marwanid line, and its numerous collateral branches. There were the *baladiyyun*, the descendants of the men who crossed in 711–714, who considered the country theirs by right of conquest. There were the Syrians of the regiments settled in 743, who had arrived a generation later, been given a third of the revenues of six provinces, and were split down the middle by the ancient Qaysi–Yemeni feud imported intact from the East. There were the Berbers of the conquest and, from the late tenth century, a much larger body of Berbers imported fresh from the Maghrib. There were the *muwallads*, Muslims of Iberian descent, who by the ninth century were the demographic majority of the Muslim population and were treated by the Arab families as second-rank. There were the clients of the Umayyad house. There were the palace slaves, the *ṣaqāliba*, drawn from northern and eastern Europe, who from the tenth century held commands and governorships. There were the Maliki jurists, who controlled law, public morality and the certification of legitimacy. There were the hereditary lords of the three marches. And there were the secretaries — including Christians and Jews — who ran the correspondence, the diplomacy and, at times, the treasury.

These groups fought each other whenever the centre weakened. The Qaysi and Yemeni Syrians fought a war in the 740s. The Arabs and the Berbers fought in 741. The *muwallads* fought the Arabs across the ninth century. The Berbers and the *ṣaqāliba* and the townsmen of Córdoba fought each other into the ground after 1009.

And yet between 756 and 1008 not one of them ever put forward a candidate of their own for the throne.

The thing the Goths could not do

That is the single most consequential fact in this module and it is best seen against the other order that occupied the same ground.

The Visigothic kingdom was an elective monarchy. The king was chosen by the magnates and the bishops; the crown was, in principle, available to any of them; and the consequence was that every great man was a potential king and therefore every great man was a potential threat to whoever currently held the throne. The results are legible across two centuries: a homicidal succession, kings raised and killed by factions, and — at the end — two men striking coins in different halves of the peninsula in the same year, and an army that came to the decisive battle, on the nearest chronicler's account, out of ambition for the throne of the man commanding it.

The Cordoban Umayyads ran the opposite system, and they ran it without interruption for two hundred and fifty-three years. From Abd al-Rahman I's victory in 756 to February 1009, the ruler of al-Andalus was always an Umayyad of the Cordoban line, and the succession passed within the family. There were disputed successions inside the house, and there were rebellions against particular emirs which sometimes lasted decades. There was not, in that entire period, a serious attempt by anyone outside the family to take the office.

This is not because the family was strong. For long stretches it was not. In the 890s the emirate controlled little more than the Guadalquivir valley while a *muwallad* warlord in the mountains behind Málaga held much of the south and a *muwallad* dynasty on the upper Ebro was being called the third monarch of Hispania. The house survived that decade as a name in a city.

It survived because the name was the thing everyone else needed.

What each bloc got, and why it defended the whole

The arrangement worked because it was constructed so that each participant's defence of his own position was, in effect, a defence of the structure — which is what makes a default a default rather than a policy requiring enforcement.

The marcher lords got hereditary autonomy. The Banu Qasi on the upper Ebro, descended from a Visigothic count who converted in 714, ran the frontier for the better part of two centuries as nominal clients of Córdoba, playing the emirate off against Pamplona and Asturias. The Tujibids held Zaragoza and Calatayud. Ibn

Marwan al-Jilliqi held Mérida and Badajoz. What these families received was recognition of a position they already occupied, and the cost to Córdoba was low: acknowledgement, some revenue, and troops when the summer campaign required them. What they would have lost if the emirate fell was the legitimacy that made them lords rather than bandits, and the arbiter who kept their rivals off them.

The jurists got the law. The Maliki school became the law of al-Andalus during the ninth century and its scholars acquired a monopoly over legal authority, the certification of orthodoxy, and public morality. In exchange, they certified rulers. The value of that exchange to both sides is measurable at the two moments it broke: when al-Hakam I executed a body of jurists and later crucified three hundred of them after the rising of 818, he came close to losing the state; and when al-Mansur needed their endorsement for a usurpation in 978, he paid for it by handing them the caliph's library to purge. Nothing measures a constituency's worth like what a usurper will spend to get it.

The Syrian regiments got a third of the tax revenue of named provinces, and with it a permanent stake in the fiscal machinery. A regiment that lives on a district's revenue wants the district's revenue collected, which means it wants the state that authorises the collection.

The palace slaves got careers that were available nowhere else on earth. A man taken as a boy from the Slav lands, with no kin in the peninsula, no tribe, no landed base and no possibility of a claim in his own right, could command armies and govern provinces. Everything he had came from the office, and if the office went he was a foreigner with no one.

The converts got entry. A *muwallad* could become a jurist, a general, a governor, a secretary. That door has been described already; its significance here is that it converted the largest potential opposition bloc into a set of individuals with careers.

And the Christian and Jewish administrators got the one thing their communities could not otherwise obtain: indispensability. A bilingual clerk who carried petitions into the palace, a physician who managed the caliph's foreign correspondence, a count who collected the taxes of his own community — each held a position that existed only because the arrangement existed, and each would have been nothing without it.

Set these together and the mechanism is visible. Nobody in this list had to believe in the Umayyad house. Each of them had to prefer the arrangement to the most likely alternative, which in every case was the supremacy of one of the others.

Balance as deliberate policy

The rulers understood this and engineered it, and two instances are explicit enough to be quoted as policy.

When the Umayyads wanted the upper Ebro held against the independence-minded *muwallad* nobility of the region, they did not send an army. They installed the Tujibids — an Arab family — at Zaragoza and Calatayud as a counterweight. The frontier was thereafter governed by two hereditary lineages with a permanent interest in each other's failure, both of them requiring Córdoba's recognition to be preferred over the other.

And when Abd al-Rahman III faced the deadlock between the Arab and Berber blocs, he imported a third that belonged to neither. The *ṣaqāliba* were brought into the court and the army precisely because they had no local base, no genealogy that mattered in the peninsula, and no possibility of an independent claim. It is a textbook piece of balance-engineering and it worked for two generations.

Both moves have the same shape: the ruler does not defeat a faction, he creates or promotes a rival to it, and then becomes the only party both can appeal to. That is how an arbiter manufactures the demand for arbitration.

The ninth century: where the first fracture came from

The emirate very nearly died in the fifty years after 850, and it is worth being precise about who nearly killed it, because the answer is not intuitive.

It was not the Christian peasantry, who never rose. It was not the Christian kingdoms of the north, who were small and poor and mostly on the defensive. It was the *muwallads*: converts and the descendants of converts, Muslims in law and practice, who had gone through the door the arrangement held open and found a ceiling on the other side.

Their grievance was genealogical. The Arab families of al-Andalus held that descent from the conquering lineages conferred precedence, and the court's whole idiom — panegyric, pedigree, the tracing of tribes back to the Hijaz — was built on it. A Muslim of Iberian descent was, socially, a second-rank Muslim, and the ninth century produced an Andalusi version of the argument being had across the Islamic world about whether Arab descent conferred anything at all.

Armed with means and standing, they rebelled. The Banu Qasi ran the upper Ebro as an independent power. Ibn Marwan al-Jilliqi held the lower march in alliance with the Christian king of Asturias. Toledo revolted repeatedly. And in the mountains behind Málaga, Umar ibn Hafsun — of Hispano-Gothic descent, a *muwallad* by

definition — built a state that lasted nearly forty years, at one point threatened Córdoba itself, and in 899 took the further step of renouncing Islam altogether.

That last act is the most revealing thing in the whole episode, and it points in the opposite direction from where it first appears. Ibn Hafsun's rebellion had been a *muwallad* rebellion, which is to say a rebellion by Muslims claiming their due within the arrangement. When he converted to Christianity he stopped being that, and the Arabic sources report — and there is no reason to doubt this part, since it is what beat him — that a good many of his *muwallad* followers left him. He had converted a demand for inclusion into a demand for exit, and his own base did not want exit. They wanted the ceiling removed.

Abd al-Rahman III's solution, over the twenty years from 912, was the correct one and it had two halves. He destroyed the rebels militarily, took Bobastro in 928, and displayed the apostate's corpse. And then he admitted the survivors. *Muwallads* who had been in rebellion were taken into the army and the administration; the caliphal court of the mid-tenth century was staffed on ability and loyalty rather than pedigree; and the caliph himself, whose mother was a captive from the north and whose paternal grandmother was a princess of Pamplona, was in point of ancestry more Basque than Arab and made nothing of it either way.

A fracture that came from the ceiling was closed by raising the ceiling.

The one thing he did not take

Which brings this module to the man who proves the whole argument by what he declined to do.

Muhammad ibn Abi Amir, called al-Mansur, took control of the state in 978 and held it until his death in 1002. The list of what he possessed is worth setting out in full, because the omission at the end of it is the point.

He held the office of chamberlain and made it the seat of government. He built his own palace city, Madinat al-Zahira, and moved the administration into it. He abolished the old regimental structure of the army in 991 and rebuilt it around troops recruited by himself and paid from a treasury he controlled. He led some fifty campaigns and took Zamora, Barcelona, Coimbra and Santiago. He bought the jurists with the caliph's library. He married a daughter of the king of Pamplona. He arranged for his son to succeed him in his own office, making the chamberlainship hereditary in his family. And he kept the caliph, Hisham II, alive in a palace, unseen by his subjects, produced for ceremonies, and named in the coinage and the Friday sermon throughout.

He did not take the title.

There is no serious argument that he lacked the power. He had the army, the treasury, the capital, the jurists and the caliph's person. What he lacked was a reason, and the absence of that reason is the structure of this entire module.

The caliphal title was the object on which every bloc in al-Andalus coordinated. Its value to each of them consisted precisely in its being unavailable to any of the others. A caliph who was a child, then a recluse, then a name — of a house that could no longer contest anything — was the perfect focal point: prestigious enough that his warrant meant something, indispensable enough that no governor could be appointed and no campaign proclaimed without it, and unobtainable enough that no bloc had to fear any other bloc obtaining it.

Al-Mansur could take everything the office produced without taking the office. Taking the office would have converted him from the man who administered the universal warrant into one more claimant to it — and would have told every other bloc in the country that the warrant was, after all, available. He was far too intelligent to do that. He hid the caliph rather than killing him, for the same reason, and it is the clearest evidence of his understanding: a dead caliph would have been a vacancy, and a vacancy is an invitation.

November 1008

His elder son inherited the position in 1002 and held it competently until October 1008, when he died on campaign — possibly poisoned by his younger brother.

The younger brother was Abd al-Rahman, called Sanchuelo — little Sancho — because he was the son of al-Mansur by a daughter of the king of Pamplona and was said to resemble his Christian grandfather. He took his father's office in October 1008. A month later he obtained from Hisham II his nomination as heir to the caliphate.

The Umayyad family, on the account transmitted, understood that appointment as the formal end of their caliphate. So, evidently, did everyone else.

In February 1009, while Sanchuelo was away campaigning in León, an Umayyad of a collateral branch seized Córdoba, deposed and imprisoned Hisham II, and proclaimed himself caliph. Sanchuelo turned back, found his own army melting, was captured, and was killed on 4 March 1009.

Three months from the nomination to the corpse. Two hundred and fifty-three years of arrangement, and it ended in a season.

And then it did not stop, which is the second half of the finding. The man who overthrew Sanchuelo began persecuting and expelling the Berber troops; the Berbers withdrew, proclaimed a rival Umayyad, and came back with a Castilian army. Hisham II was released, restored, deposed, restored again in 1010, and disappeared in 1013.

Rival Umayyads went north to buy Christian support, one from the count of Castile and one from the counts of Barcelona and Urgell. In 1016 the caliphate passed out of the Umayyad family altogether to a Berber house of Idrisid descent, the Hammudids — and once that had happened, the office had been demonstrated to be obtainable, and there was nothing left to coordinate on. Córdoba was besieged for two and a half years, the two palace cities were destroyed, and in 1031 the remaining notables of the city abolished the caliphate rather than fill it again.

What followed was a peninsula of thirty-odd principalities run by the very blocs the arrangement had held together: Arab lineages at Zaragoza and Seville, Berber commanders at Granada and Málaga, palace slaves at Valencia, Denia and Almería. Nothing had been added. The parts simply stopped being held.

Reading the default against the framework

Five things.

One, and it is the contribution: **the ideal object of elite coordination is an office that is prestigious, indispensable and unobtainable — and the third property is the load-bearing one.** The intuition is that hierarchies are stabilised by strong rulers. This case shows the opposite with unusual clarity. The Cordoban arrangement was at its most stable in the years when the caliph was a boy who never left a palace, because a ruler who cannot act is a threat to nobody, while the office he occupies is worth having on your side. Every bloc could accept the warrant of a house that could not harm it and could not be displaced by a rival bloc, and no bloc could accept the supremacy of any other.

So the diagnostic question is not how strong a sovereign is. It is: **to whom is the office unavailable, and how completely?** Where the answer is "to everyone in the arrangement, absolutely," expect coordination to hold through defeats, minorities, rebellions and long stretches of central weakness. Where the office is available to any of the participants — as in an elective monarchy where every magnate is a candidate — expect the arrangement to be consumed by the contest for it, on this same ground and with the same geography and much the same population.

Two: **an arrangement of this kind fails by a single defection, not by decay, and therefore fails fast.** Because its entire value consists in nobody claiming, the first successful claim destroys the object's usefulness for every participant simultaneously. There is no gradual erosion to observe and no partial failure to arrest. The caliphate of Córdoba was, in 1007, the strongest state in western Europe, with the best army, the largest revenues and no external enemy capable of threatening it. Its terminal crisis began with a document and was irreversible within four months.

The instruction that follows is diagnostic rather than predictive: in an order held together by an unobtainable office, do not look for the collapse in the military or fiscal indicators, which will look excellent until the end. Look at whether anyone has begun to treat the office as available — and treat the first such act, however procedurally correct it appears, as the terminal event.

Three: **fracture comes from the ceiling, not the floor.** Both of this order's serious fractures came from groups that had been admitted, had acquired standing and means, and had then been stopped one step short. The *muwallads* of the ninth century had the faith, the language, the offices and the estates, and were denied precedence on grounds of descent; they rebelled for two generations, and their greatest leader lost his own following the moment he tried to convert their demand for inclusion into a demand for exit. The Amirids of the eleventh century had the army, the treasury, the capital and the hereditary succession to the chief office of state, and were denied only the title; the son asked for it and destroyed everything within the year.

The general form: **identify the group that has been given nearly everything and refused one thing, and the one thing refused will name the fracture.** It is not the excluded who bring an order down. It is the almost-included, because only they have both the grievance and the means, and only they can see precisely what they are being denied.

Four: **the instrument that solves the coordination problem may be the same instrument that produces the collapse.** Abd al-Rahman III imported a bloc with no local roots precisely because rootlessness made it neutral between the factions he had to balance. That was correct, and it worked. It also created a body of armed men whose entire connection to the country was a stipend, which is exactly the vulnerability that destroyed the state when the stipend stopped. The same is true of al-Mansur's reforms: hiding the caliph solved the problem of interference and dismantled the object of coordination; abolishing the regiments solved the problem of factional armies and removed the last stake anybody had in the ground. This is not a criticism of either man. It is a structural observation that ought to be applied generally — **an arrangement's solutions accumulate as its liabilities**, because each one removes a constraint that was also a support, and the bill is not presented to the man who signed for it.

Five, and it closes the pair this study began with: the default can survive the ruler becoming a fiction. It cannot survive the fiction becoming available. Hisham II was a fiction from 978 and the arrangement functioned superbly for thirty years; the fiction was the arrangement's most valuable asset, and the man who created it was the arrangement's greatest beneficiary. What ended it was not that anyone discovered the caliph was powerless — everybody knew — but that somebody proposed to inherit

him. A shared fiction that all parties maintain is a coordination device of enormous power. The moment one party attempts to own it, it stops being shared, and there is nothing underneath it at all.

A note on sources. The dynastic chronology — Abd al-Rahman I's victory in 756, the unbroken Umayyad succession to February 1009, al-Mansur as chamberlain from 978 to 1002, Abd al-Malik al-Muzaffar to October 1008, Abd al-Rahman Sanchuelo from October 1008, his nomination as heir a month later, the coup of February 1009, his death on 4 March 1009, the depositions and restorations of Hisham II, the passage of the caliphate to the Hammudids in 1016 and its abolition in 1031 — follows the standard reference accounts, which are consistent on the sequence and vary on detail. The suggestion that Sanchuelo poisoned his brother is reported in the tradition as a suspicion and is given here as such. The statement that the Umayyad family regarded Sanchuelo's nomination as the formal end of their caliphate is paraphrased from the modern scholarship's rendering of the Arabic sources and is not quoted; the underlying witness is Ibn Hayyan, whose father was present at some of these events and whose work survives only in part.

The composition of the elite blocs, the Qaysi–Yemeni division carried over from Syria, the settlement of the *junds*, and the introduction of the *ṣaqāliba* by Abd al-Rahman III as a third element neutral between the Arab and Berber factions, follow the standard accounts and are paraphrased. The installation of the Tujibids at Zaragoza and Calatayud as a counterweight to the *muwallad* nobility of the Upper March is stated in that literature and is the clearest documented instance of deliberate balancing. The Banu Qasi's descent from a Visigothic count converting in 714, and the epithet "third monarch of Hispania" applied to Musa ibn Musa in the 850s, come through Ibn al-Qutiyya and the later compilers; the objection that such conversion-and-descent narratives may be later Umayyad antiquarianism was registered in the module on the settlement and applies here too. Ibn Marwan al-Jilliqi's lordship of the Lower March in alliance with Alfonso III of Asturias, and the reincorporation of former *muwallad* rebels into the army and administration after Abd al-Rahman III's campaigns, follow the modern scholarship.

The account of Umar ibn Hafsun — the duration of the revolt, his conversion to Christianity in 899, the fall of Bobastro in 928, the exhumation and crucifixion — is transmitted principally in the Umayyad tradition, that is, by the party with an interest in establishing his apostasy and in explaining his defeat; the specific claim used here, that his conversion cost him *muwallad* support, is drawn from that tradition and from the modern literature on the revolt, and is flagged as an interested source reporting something that happens also to be structurally plausible. The characterisation of the

muwallad grievance as genealogical, and its connection to the wider *shuʿubiyya* argument about whether Arab descent conferred precedence, is paraphrased from the scholarship.

The comparison with the Visigothic elective monarchy, the succession violence it produced, the two kings striking coins in 710, and the near-contemporary chronicler's statement that Roderic's army came to the field out of ambition for the throne, is drawn from the first module of this study and from the companion study of the Visigothic kingdom, where the Latin is quoted from public-domain texts. Modern scholarship consulted and paraphrased rather than quoted includes Hugh Kennedy on the emirate and caliphate and Janina Safran and Maribel Fierro on the tenth-century settlement of legitimacy; where accounts disagree, the disagreement is reported. As with every module in this study, the narrative substrate descends from the dynasty's own court annalists through Ibn Hayyan, and the reader should weigh the account of the rebels accordingly.

MODULE 9

King and People Alike

Liberty — what stood between a subject and the apparatus, where that protection came from, what it never covered, and the one thing the conquest quietly took away.

One sentence, two halves

The most useful single passage on liberty in al-Andalus was written by a Lotharingian monk who had never been there before and had to have the local rules explained to him. It comes from the life of John of Gorze, describing why the Cordoban palace could not let the caliph receive a letter from Otto, and it contains — in one breath — the strongest protection the order offered and the sharpest foreclosure it imposed.

> *Lex enim tam improvocabilis eos constringit, ut quod semel antiquitus omni ei genti praefixum est, nullo unquam liceat modo dissolvi, parique modo Rex populusque tenentur innexi, omnisque transgressio gladio feritur. Si quid ab inferioribus Rex, si quid Rex ipse commiserit, cunctus in eum populus animadvertit. Eis in legibus primum dirumque est, ne quis in religionem eorum quid unquam audeat loqui: civis sit vel extraneus, nulla intercedente redemptione, capite plectitur.*
> *"For a law so unappealable binds them that what was laid down of old for that whole people may never in any way be dissolved; and king and people are held bound in it alike, and every transgression is struck with the sword. If an inferior has committed something, or if the king himself has committed it, the whole people takes note against him. First and most terrible in their laws is this: that no one should ever dare to say anything against their religion — be he citizen or stranger, with no ransom intervening, he is beheaded."*

Parique modo Rex populusque tenentur innexi. A foreign observer's first and most striking impression of the caliphate of Córdoba was that its ruler was under the law, that the law was not his to alter, and that his subjects would hold him to it.

And in the next clause, that nobody in the country might say anything about religion, ever, under pain of death, with no distinction between subject and foreigner and no possibility of paying a fine instead.

Both statements are true, and the module's work is to establish who was protected by the first, where that protection came from, and how far the second reached.

The contract

The largest protection in al-Andalus was a contract, and it should be described as one rather than as a policy of tolerance.

The *dhimma* gave a protected non-Muslim his life, his property, his religion, his clergy, his places of worship and his own courts for his own community's affairs, in exchange for a tax and for submission. It was not a grant revocable at pleasure. The jurists treated it as a binding obligation on the ruler, and its terms in a given place were typically fixed by a written instrument agreed at the moment of surrender.

The evidence that it functioned is unusually good, because it comes from a hostile source. The Christian chronicler of 754, writing four decades after the conquest and no friend of the regime, records of the agreement made with the Visigothic commander Theodemir that it was renewed by the caliph himself and then — *sicque hactenus permanet stabilitus, ut nullatenus a successoribus Arabum tante vim proligationis solvatur* — that it remained in force to the time of writing, in no way dissolved by the successors of the Arabs. By 754 those successors had included the recall and ruin of the conquerors, the murder of a governor, a dozen changes of administration, the Berber rising of 740, the arrival of the Syrian regiments, and the destruction of the dynasty in the East. The contract survived all of it.

Now the question this module exists to ask: where did that protection come from?

Not from a faction inside al-Andalus extracting a concession. The *dhimma* arrived in the peninsula fully formed, imported from the eastern conquests, and it had been worked out there in the previous eighty years — by commanders facing walled cities with small armies, who needed the towns to open rather than to be stormed, and who needed the revenue intact rather than the population dead. The consideration on the conquered's side was the cost of taking their walls. Theodemir's pact was signed by a man who, the chronicler is careful to record, had inflicted no small slaughter on the Arabs before he made terms with them.

So this liberty was bought, and its price is identifiable: it was purchased by the conquered's capacity to make the conquest expensive. That has an implication which belongs at the front of this module rather than the end. **A liberty bought at the moment of surrender is priced by the seller's leverage at that moment, and it lasts only as long as anybody remembers the leverage.** The Christians of al-Andalus in 1000 could not have made anything expensive for anybody. Their protection persisted for a century after their bargaining power had gone, on inertia, custom and the jurists' insistence that a contract is a contract — which is a considerable achievement of legal culture and is exactly the kind of thing that does not survive a change of regime.

The petition

There was also a working right to petition, and the description of it is the same Latin source, at the moment when it explains what Recemundus did for a living.

The suits of the various people gathering at the palace for their needs, the text says, were heard outside; because there all complaints and cases are set down and released in writing, he would carry the notes in, and carry the written answers back out; and several others were assigned to the same office.

A department. Written petitions. Written answers. Staff. That is a bureaucratic institution for handling subject grievances against the apparatus, described in passing by a foreigner with no reason to flatter it — which is far better evidence than any court panegyric would have been. Alongside it stood the *maẓalim*, the ruler's own jurisdiction over complaints against officials, an institution designed precisely to be an appeal above the ordinary courts against the ordinary administration.

The honest qualification is that a petition apparatus is not a right in the sense of an enforceable claim; it is a channel, and channels can be ignored. But it existed, it was staffed, it produced written answers, and it was available to non-Muslims — since the man running it was one.

The certifier who had to be free to refuse

The most interesting protection in al-Andalus, and the one that answers this module's central question, was the standing of the jurists. It requires explaining, because its origin does not fit the usual pattern.

The usual pattern is a faction with means extracting a concession from a ruler who prefers concession to civil war, and the concession then accreting as a right that outlives the fight that produced it. That did not happen here. What happened instead is stranger and, once seen, general.

The Umayyads of Córdoba had a legitimacy problem for their entire existence. They were an amputated branch of a destroyed dynasty, ruling without the caliphal title for a hundred and seventy-three years, refusing to acknowledge the Abbasids, and after 909 facing a rival caliphate across the water. Their whole position rested on being the rightful and orthodox authority, and that is a claim which cannot be self-certified. Somebody with independent standing had to say it.

So they built the certifier. The Maliki school became the law of al-Andalus during the ninth century with state encouragement, its scholars were given the courts, the endowments, the certification of orthodoxy and the supervision of public morality — and, necessarily, an authority that did not derive from the ruler's appointment. A

scholar's standing came from other scholars. That is the whole point of a certifier: an endorsement is worth exactly as much as the endorser's freedom to withhold it, and an endorsement that could not have been refused is worth nothing at all.

Which means the ruler was structurally obliged to tolerate a body of men who could publicly disagree with him — because the day they lost that capacity, their agreement stopped being useful.

The relationship was tested and the test is dated. Al-Hakam I executed jurists early in his reign and, after the rising of 818, crucified some three hundred of the notables and jurists of the Córdoban suburb. He won; the suburb was levelled and the survivors deported. But his successors did not repeat it. Abd al-Rahman II spent his reign building the Maliki establishment into the machinery of the state rather than fighting it, and every ruler after him treated the jurists as a constituency to be managed.

Mundhir ibn Saʿid

The best-known instance of what this bought is a story that must be handled carefully, because it has all the characteristics of an edifying tale and none of the characteristics of a document.

Mundhir ibn Saʿid al-Ballūṭī, born about 887 in the mountains north-west of Córdoba, was chief judge of Mérida and then, from 949 or 950, chief *qadi* of the caliphate under Abd al-Rahman III. He was a man of independent doctrine — the tradition preserves his refusal to approve a conversion document unless a Qur'anic verse was quoted in full and in context, and his willingness to argue a position on the createdness of the Qur'an that the Maliki mainstream did not hold. He delivered the oration at the reception of the Byzantine embassy.

And the tradition reports that he used the Friday sermon to rebuke the caliph to his face, in public, over the building of Madinat al-Zahra — accusing him of imitating the infidels and tyrants who raise monuments to their own vanity and treat perishable buildings as though they were signs of God. In one version of the episode the caliph is described afterwards in retreat, in the poorest clothing, ashes on his head and beard, weeping and confessing.

Mundhir remained chief *qadi* until his death in 966, some sixteen years after his appointment and well past the rebuke, outliving the caliph he had rebuked.

Now the caveats, and they are heavy. The episode survives in at least four versions in compilations written between three and seven centuries afterwards, including al-Dhahabi in the fourteenth century and al-Maqqari in the seventeenth. It is exactly the kind of story that accumulates around a famously upright judge, and the caliph's

penitential display in particular has the shape of hagiography rather than reportage. Nothing here rests on its having happened as told.

What does not require the story to be true is the framework it presupposes. A tale of this kind is only tellable in a society where the audience finds it plausible that a judge could say such a thing and keep his office — and the datum that Mundhir held the chief judgeship until he died, under two rulers, is not a story but a fact of the office lists. The anecdote is unreliable evidence of an event and reliable evidence of what was thinkable.

What it did not cover

Set beside all of that the second half of the sentence this module opened with, and the boundary becomes very clear.

There was no liberty of speech on religion, for anyone. Not for Christians, not for Muslims, not for foreigners. The forty-eight executions at Córdoba between 850 and 859 were, almost all of them, for publicly denouncing Muhammad or for apostasy, and the state applied the penalty without much apparent enthusiasm and without any apparent discretion, because it had none to exercise. Ibn Masarra's writings were burned around 961 as a danger to the public. Al-Mansur handed the caliph's library to a commission of jurists in 978 and they burned the philosophy, the logic, the astronomy and the geometry.

There was no exit. Conversion into Islam was free and welcomed; conversion out of it was capital, and the two cases that framed the martyr episode were both of young women in mixed households whose fathers' religion the law had assigned to them.

And the protection of the certifier had a price, which was discovered in 978. Al-Mansur needed the jurists' endorsement for a usurpation and paid for it in books, and they took it. A liberty that exists because a ruler needs a credible endorsement lasts exactly as long as the endorsement is not for sale. Once it was, the men who had been the country's one independent authority became the instrument by which its intellectual inheritance was destroyed and its constitution overturned, and both in the same decade.

What the conquest took away, without touching anyone

Now the loss, and it is the part of this module that could not have been seen without the companion case on the same ground.

The Christians of al-Andalus kept, for centuries, almost everything an outsider would count. They kept their churches, their monasteries, their liturgy in Latin, their

calendar, their bishops, their saints, their courts and their own law — the Visigothic code remained in use among them. They kept the right to hold a council, and did, at Córdoba in 839. Nobody was compelled in religion. On any inventory of religious liberty, the ledger looks remarkably intact.

What they lost was the councils of Toledo.

In the Visigothic kingdom, the national councils were not merely ecclesiastical assemblies. They were the constitutional machinery of the state. They legislated; the king promulgated their canons as law; they laid down rules that bound the monarch — governing what a king might do to his subjects' property, what happened to a dead king's family, how a king was to be made and what the people owed him and he owed them. Their most famous canon binds king and people to each other in explicit terms and threatens the king who breaks faith with his subjects.

After 711 the Christian community of al-Andalus kept the assembly and lost the function. Its councils could condemn a heresy. They could not legislate, they could not bind a ruler, and by 852 the one that mattered most was convened on the emir's order, presided over by a metropolitan taking the government's side, and used to discipline the community's own dissidents. Alvarus described the Christians of Córdoba as subject to that metropolitan by royal decree.

Nothing was confiscated to achieve this. No church was closed, no bishop deposed, no council prohibited. The institution went on meeting. What was quietly not restored, because the state that had backed it no longer existed and the state that replaced it had no reason to recreate it, was its capacity to constrain a ruler. The Christians of al-Andalus kept the whole apparatus of worship and lost the whole apparatus of constitutional voice, and it is not obvious that anyone at the time noticed the difference, because everything they could see was still there.

And it is worth being exact about the balance, because this study is not in the business of nostalgia for the seventh century. The order that possessed those councils used them to compel the baptism of Jews, to declare converts irreversibly bound, to bar from office those descended from Jews, to remove children from their parents, and finally to enslave a population by decree. The constitutional machinery that constrained the king was the same machinery that legislated that. The conquest destroyed both at once, and a Jewish family in Córdoba in 950 was in a position its ancestors in Toledo in 690 would have regarded as deliverance. Both of those sentences are true and neither cancels the other.

Who could actually use any of it

The last honest accounting. Protections in al-Andalus were real and they were distributed very unevenly.

A community with a pact had a contract, and the contract held. A scholar with a certification had a standing the ruler could not simply remove. A landholder had property rights enforceable in a court, and a *dhimmi* landholder could and did use the *qadi*'s court when he preferred its outcomes to his own community's. A townsman could petition, in writing, and get a written answer. A frontier lord had autonomy that amounted to sovereignty.

A slave had nothing except the possibility of manumission, which was at his owner's discretion, and the rule that a concubine who bore a child could not be sold. There were a great many slaves.

A peasant had the rate in the pact and the *qadi*'s court, which is not nothing — a court that a subject population uses voluntarily is a real good and this one was used — and beyond that he had the door described in an earlier module, which was a remedy for his own position and never a claim against the apparatus.

And nobody at all had the right to say what he thought about God.

Reading liberty against the framework

Five things, and the fourth is the one this case was best placed to find.

One: **a liberty can arise as an unavoidable by-product of a ruler's need for credible legitimation, and this is a distinct origin from the extracted concession.** The standard model is a faction bargaining from strength: it has means, the ruler prefers concession to war, and the concession accretes as a right. The jurists of al-Andalus never bargained from strength in that sense; they were built up by rulers who needed them. But the thing the rulers needed was an *endorsement*, and an endorsement's worth is exactly proportional to the endorser's freedom to withhold it. A ruler who requires certification must therefore maintain an institution capable of refusing him, and the space that institution occupies becomes, incidentally and without anyone intending it, a space in which things can be said to a ruler that could not be said anywhere else.

The signature of this kind of liberty is distinctive and worth listing, because it tells you what you are looking at. It protects the certifier, not the subject. It covers the certifier's domain — here law, taxation and orthodoxy — and nothing outside it. It produces no document, because nothing was conceded. And it is revocable the moment the ruler finds a cheaper source of endorsement, which is precisely what

happened in 978 when a usurper bought the jurists with a library he had no use for. The diagnostic: **ask what a ruler needs to be told, and by whom, and you will have located the one place where criticism is survivable — and its exact boundaries.**

Two: **a liberty purchased at the moment of surrender is priced by the seller's leverage at that moment and outlives it only on custom.** The *dhimma* was bought by populations that could have made a siege expensive, in an eighty-year negotiation conducted across the eastern Mediterranean before it ever reached Spain. It held in al-Andalus for three centuries and more, long after the communities it protected had lost any capacity to make anything costly for anybody, sustained by legal culture and by the plain fact that the state was better off collecting from them than converting them. That is a real achievement and it is also a warning: the instruction is to date a liberty to the moment of its purchase, identify what was paid for it, and then ask whether the payer could pay again. Where the answer is no, the liberty is running on the goodwill of the institution that administers it, and a regime with different priorities will find it cheap to revise.

Three: **a conquest can foreclose a liberty without touching a single person or a single building.** Nothing was taken from the Christians of al-Andalus in 711 that they could see. Their churches, clergy, liturgy, calendar, courts and law all continued. What was not restored was the one institution among them that had constrained a ruler, because the state that had given the councils of Toledo their teeth was gone and the new one had no reason to recreate the arrangement. The general test: **after a conquest, list which of the incumbent order's institutions were left running and which were quietly not, and the ones not restored will be the ones that had constrained rulers.** They are also the ones whose absence is hardest to notice, because the buildings and the personnel remain.

Four, and it is this module's main contribution: **an open door prevents constitutional residue.** Three centuries of intense factional conflict in al-Andalus — Qaysi against Yemeni, Arab against Berber, *muwallad* against Arab, jurist against emir, *ṣaqāliba* against everyone — produced no charter, no assembly with a veto, no standing body with a defined competence against the ruler, and no document any subject could point to. This is a startling absence given how much fighting there was, and the explanation is in the structure of how the fights were settled.

Every one of them was resolved by admitting individuals rather than by conceding to a body. The *muwallads* wanted precedence; Abd al-Rahman III crushed their revolt and then took the survivors into the army and the administration on their merits, and the grievance dissolved because the aggrieved were now inside on satisfactory terms. The jurists wanted deference; they got courts, endowments and the certification

monopoly, which are offices rather than rights. The frontier families wanted autonomy; they got recognition of what they already held. Nobody ever had to be given a claim enforceable against the state, because everybody could be given a place inside it.

Put this beside the standard counter-case. English barons could not be individually admitted into the crown; there was one throne, it was already occupied, and the thing they wanted could not be distributed. So the only settlement available was a written concession to them as a body, and the written concession outlived the fight and became a right that later people who had never been barons could invoke. **A grievance that can be settled by admission produces careers; a grievance that cannot be settled by admission produces documents.**

This closes a line that has been running through the whole study. The same feature — an open door — dissolved collective grievance among the ruled, moved the fracture from the excluded to the almost-included, and prevented the accretion of rights. All three follow from one property of the arrangement, and the third is the one that had no compensating benefit: al-Andalus was in many respects an unusually lawful society, with a real contract for its minorities, a functioning petition apparatus and a judiciary that could rebuke a caliph, and when the arrangement broke in 1009 there was not one instrument in the whole country that anybody could hold up and appeal to.

Five, as a caution against the shape of the argument rather than a finding: the ledger in this module does not net out, and it is not meant to. The same order that gave a Jewish community in Córdoba a security its ancestors under the Visigoths could not have imagined maintained a capital penalty for a sentence spoken about God, ran on slave labour and slave soldiers, and burned its own best library to pay for a coup. The same conciliar apparatus whose loss is recorded here as a foreclosure had been used, in its last decades, to enslave a religious minority by decree. Liberties are not a quantity that a society has more or less of. They are specific protections, held by specific people, against specific parts of the apparatus, purchased at identifiable moments for identifiable prices — and the useful question is never whether an order was free, but who was protected from what, and what they or someone else had paid.

A note on sources. The Latin from the *Vita Iohannis Gorziensis*, chapter 120, is quoted from the text edited by G. H. Pertz for the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptores* IV (Hanover, 1841), as reprinted in the *Acta Sanctorum*, Februarii III (Paris, 1865); public domain, translation mine, read from a scanned facsimile whose transcription is imperfect at other points but clean here. It is a hagiography written around 980 by a man who was not present, and its statement of Islamic law is a Lotharingian monk's rendering of what he was told at Córdoba, not a legal text; it is used as evidence of how the arrangement was described to an outsider, which is what it

is well placed to supply, and the phrase *parique modo Rex populusque tenentur innexi* is treated as that observer's impression rather than as a constitutional fact. The description of the petition office is from chapter 128 of the same work and is discussed in the module on information. The Latin on Theodemir's pact — *sicque hactenus permanet stabilitus* — is from the *Chronicle of 754* in Mommsen's edition, *MGH AA* XI (Berlin, 1894), public domain.

The account of Mundhir ibn Saʿid al-Ballūṭī is flagged on the page as unreliable in its particulars and the flag is not a formality. His dates (born c. 886 or 887, chief *qadi* from 949 or 950, died 966), his tenure under two rulers, and his role at the Byzantine reception rest on the biographical literature and are reasonably secure. The rebuke of Abd al-Rahman III from the pulpit over Madinat al-Zahra survives in at least four versions in compilations written between three and seven centuries later, including al-Dhahabi and al-Maqqari, and the caliph's penitential display in particular has the form of an edifying tale; the argument here rests only on the fact of his continued tenure and on what the currency of such a story implies about what was thinkable. Maribel Fierro's work on Mundhir and on Abd al-Rahman III's choice of judges, and Janina Safran's on the negotiation of boundaries in al-Andalus, are paraphrased and credited.

The description of the *dhimma* — its contractual character, the obligations on both sides, the jurists' treatment of it as binding on the ruler, and the survival of community courts and the Visigothic code among the Mozarabs — follows the standard accounts and is given in its settled form; early practice varied more than this summary allows. The *maẓalim* jurisdiction is described from the standard accounts of Islamic administration; no Andalusi records of its operation survive. The Maliki establishment's growth under Abd al-Rahman II, al-Hakam I's executions of jurists and the crucifixion of some three hundred notables and jurists after the rising of 818, the burning of Ibn Masarra's writings around 961, and al-Mansur's purge of the caliphal library in the late 970s are treated at length in earlier modules with their sources and caveats there.

The Visigothic conciliar apparatus — the legislative function of the councils of Toledo, the promulgation of their canons as royal law, and the canons binding the king to his people — is drawn from the companion study of the Visigothic kingdom, where the Latin is quoted from public-domain texts; so is the anti-Jewish legislation set beside it. Alvarus's description of the Christians of Córdoba as subject to Reccafred by royal decree is from the *Vita Eulogii* and is reported here from the modern scholarship rather than quoted, since it has not been verified in a public-domain edition; it remains the one load-bearing citation in this study still standing on a paraphrase, and it is flagged as such. The observation that the fights of al-Andalus produced no constitutional

document is this study's, made from the absence of any such instrument in the record rather than from any source asserting it, and a reader who knows of one should say so.

MODULE 10

Not One New Man

Change and collapse — twenty-two years of civil war, a capital sacked, thirty successor states, and the question of who was ever in a position to make any of it happen.

The strongest state in western Europe

In 1007 the caliphate of Córdoba had the largest revenues, the best army and the most populous cities west of Constantinople. It had no external enemy capable of threatening it; the Christian kingdoms of the north had spent the previous quarter-century being raided almost annually and paying for peace. Its frontier was quiet because it was the aggressor everywhere along it. Its administration functioned, its coinage was sound, its courts sat, and its capital was probably the largest city in Europe.

Every indicator that a modern analyst would reach for looked excellent, and every one of them was irrelevant. Within eighteen months the state was in civil war; within six years the capital had been sacked by its own army; within twenty-four the caliphate had been formally abolished by the notables of the city that had housed it for two and a half centuries.

This module is about how that happened and, more importantly, about who did it — because the record here is unusually complete and unusually clean, and it permits a question that most collapses do not: when a state of this size disintegrates absolutely, who ends up holding the pieces?

The sequence

Al-Mansur died in 1002 and his elder son held the chamberlainship competently until October 1008, when he died on campaign. His younger brother took the office, and a month later had himself named heir to the caliphate.

In February 1009 an Umayyad of a collateral branch, Muhammad ibn Hisham, seized Córdoba with the support of the city's population, deposed the caliph Hisham II and proclaimed himself. The chamberlain was away campaigning in León; he turned back, found his army dissolving, and was killed on 4 March.

The new caliph then attacked the Berber regiments his predecessors had imported, persecuting them and driving them out of the city. The Berbers withdrew north to Calatrava, proclaimed a different Umayyad, Sulayman, and went to buy an army. They

bought Sancho García, count of Castile. In November 1009 that combined force beat the Cordoban army at Alcolea and Sulayman was installed.

Muhammad ibn Hisham then went and bought an army of his own — Ramon Borrell, count of Barcelona, and his brother Armengol of Urgell, hired for pay and plunder. He retook Córdoba in 1010 and was dead within months. Hisham II was restored in July 1010, and vanished in 1013.

In 1013 the Berbers, after a siege that had run for years, stormed Córdoba and sacked it. The palace city of Madinat al-Zahra, on which a third of the state's revenue had been spent for a quarter-century, was destroyed in this period; so was the palace city al-Mansur had built for himself. In 1016 the caliphate passed out of the Umayyad family altogether to a Berber house of Idrisid descent. Between 1016 and 1031 caliphs were raised and deposed at intervals measured in months — one of them, Abd al-Rahman V, reigned for forty-seven days before a crowd of unemployed workmen stormed the palace and forced his execution.

In 1031 the notables of Córdoba stopped filling the office and abolished it.

Who was actually fighting

The roster of participants in the war is worth setting beside the roster of blocs in the arrangement, because they are the same list.

There were the Umayyad claimants, drawn from the collateral branches of a family that had been breeding princes for two and a half centuries and seating one at a time. There were the Amirids, the chamberlain's dynasty, which had constructed a second line of hereditary power and then produced a son who wanted the title. There were the Berber regiments imported by al-Mansur, professional, landless and paid. There were the palace slaves, commanders and governors with troops and no kin in the country. There were the old Arab lineages of the marches and the south. There were the hereditary frontier families. There were the jurists and the notables of the capital.

And there were the people of Córdoba, who appear at almost every turn of the story and require careful handling, because they are the test case for everything this module is about.

The crowd of Córdoba

They were not passive. They backed the coup of February 1009 against the Amirids, and the coup would probably not have succeeded without them. They rioted repeatedly. They demanded and got the expulsion of the Berber troops. In 1023 they installed a caliph; in January 1024 a mob of unemployed workmen attacked the palace

and forced his execution and the enthronement of another; a few months later they drove out a Hammudid and recalled an Umayyad. In 1031 it was the assembled notables of the city who ended the office.

That is a great deal of popular action, and none of it was structural change.

Look at what the crowd actually did in each instance. In February 1009 it supplied the numbers for a coup led by an Umayyad prince, who then ruled as caliph. In 1024 it forced the execution of one Umayyad and the accession of another. Every single time it acted, it acted to install or remove a member of the existing hierarchy, and every single time the man it installed came from the same pool of claimants as the man it removed. The Córdoban crowd was extremely effective at deciding *which* prince occupied a palace within its own walls, and completely incapable of altering what the palace was.

And whenever a professional army arrived, the crowd lost. The city was besieged, blockaded and eventually stormed by Berber regiments in 1013, and what followed was a sack. The population of the largest city in Europe, angry, mobilised, and repeatedly successful against unarmed courtiers, could not stand for a day against a few thousand paid soldiers.

There is a further point, and it is the one that matters most. The crowd never once produced a leader from among itself, a programme of its own, or a claim on the arrangement that was not a preference between existing claimants. Its demands were personal and negative: get rid of these Berbers, get rid of that caliph. It never demanded an institution, a charter, a share, or a rule — which is exactly what the previous module predicted, since three centuries of factional settlement by individual admission had left the country with no vocabulary of collective claims and no document to point at.

The most it achieved was to get its own way once, in 1009, when the caliph it had installed expelled the Berber troops. The consequence of that success was that the expelled troops hired a Castilian army, came back, besieged the city for years, and burned it. The crowd's preference was enacted and the crowd paid for it.

What did not happen

Now the fact that carries the module, and it is an absence.

For twenty-two years al-Andalus had no functioning central authority. The tax collection broke down. The provincial administration dissolved. The capital was besieged, blockaded and sacked. The two palace cities were levelled. Every armed body in the country was fighting another armed body, and there was no force anywhere available to suppress anything.

In those twenty-two years the rural population of al-Andalus — the great majority, taxed, and for much of the period of a different religion from its rulers — did not rise.

Not once. There is no peasant revolt in the record of the *fitna*. There is no rural movement, no jacquerie, no seizure of estates, no refusal of rents organised across a district, no leader thrown up from the villages.

This is not an argument from silence in the ordinary sense, because the period is extremely well covered in the Arabic historiography — a war among the elite is precisely what that literature exists to record, and it recorded, at length, every faction, every claimant, every commander and every betrayal. A rural rising would have been an event in that war and would have been written about. There was nothing to write about.

The floor was not merely cracked. It was in pieces on the ground for two decades. And the ruled did not act.

They hired the counts

The other thing that did not happen is that neither side armed the population, and the reason is instructive.

Both parties in 1009 and 1010 needed troops. Both went and bought them. The Berbers hired the count of Castile; the Umayyad claimant hired the counts of Barcelona and Urgell. These were straightforward commercial arrangements — pay, plunder, and in the Catalan case a campaign that ended with the mercenaries going home rich.

A fractured elite with money and access to a market in organised violence has no reason whatever to arm its own peasantry. Armed peasants are unreliable, untrained, slow to raise, and dangerous to their employer afterwards. Professional soldiers for hire are none of those things, and northern Iberia in 1009 was full of counts with retinues and nothing to do with them.

The consequences ran for two centuries. The Christian counts of 1009 and 1010 rode into the heart of al-Andalus as paid auxiliaries, saw at first hand that the caliphate had ceased to exist, learned the roads, and went home with the money. Within a generation their successors had converted the relationship into something permanent: the *parias*, annual tribute paid by the fragmented Muslim principalities to the northern kingdoms for protection — protection, very often, from each other. The direction of tribute across the peninsula, which had run north-to-south since the eighth century, reversed inside forty years.

The decisive turn in the long contest for the peninsula was not a Christian conquest and did not begin as one. It began as a subcontract in somebody else's civil war.

The army that stopped being paid

Underneath the political sequence is a fiscal mechanism, and it is the direct continuation of what an earlier module described.

Until 991 the armed force of al-Andalus was, in large part, settled on the land: regiments assigned to provinces and living on a share of the revenue there. Such an army cannot be dissolved and is permanently factional, and for two hundred and fifty years it produced convulsions the state survived. In 991 al-Mansur abolished it and built a professional army recruited from Maghribi Berbers, slaves and Christian mercenaries, with no landed income and no source of pay but the treasury.

That army had to be paid every year, and the treasury could not cover it from domestic revenue alone. The gap was closed by campaigning: fifty-odd expeditions in twenty-four years, which brought back plunder, captives and tribute. The wars were not a policy choice that happened to be profitable. They were the payroll.

In 1009 the campaigning stopped, because the man who organised it was dead and his successors were fighting each other. And an army with no land, no local kin, no alternative employer and no plunder does not disband. It looks for a paymaster; when the paymasters run out of money it takes what it needs; and when it has taken what it needs it takes territory, because territory is the only permanent solution to the problem of being paid.

That is the whole of what the Berber regiments did between 1009 and 1031, and it is why they ended up ruling Granada, Málaga, Badajoz, Toledo, Carmona, Arcos, Ronda and Morón. They were not conquering al-Andalus. They were collecting arrears.

Thirty states and the same men

When the dust settled, the peninsula contained something over twenty and by some counts more than thirty independent principalities. The list of who ruled them is the most compressed possible statement of this module's argument.

The old Arab lineages took Seville, Zaragoza, Murcia, Lisbon, Mértola, Silves, Huelva, Niebla, Mallorca and others. The Berber commanders took Granada, Málaga, Badajoz, Toledo, Carmona, Arcos, Ronda, Morón, Albarracín and Alpuente. The palace slaves took Valencia, Denia, Almería and Tortosa — the taifa of Tortosa was founded by a Slav warlord who had been a *fata* of the caliphal household. Córdoba itself, having abolished the caliphate, was governed by a council under a former vizier's family. Seville was taken by the family of its own *qadi*.

An Arab aristocracy, a professional Berber officer corps, a body of palace slaves, a vizier, and a judge.

That is not a new political class. It is the bloc list from the arrangement's own interior, transcribed onto a map. The state of al-Andalus dissolved absolutely — no central authority, no army, no treasury, no capital, no caliph — and every one of the thirty-odd successor states that emerged from the dissolution was ruled by a component of the hierarchy that had existed before it. Not one was founded by a peasant, a labourer, an artisan, a merchant outside the elite, or a religious movement from below. Not one of the country's Christian or Jewish communities, together still a substantial part of the population, produced a principality or a claim. Not one new man appears anywhere in the list.

Reading collapse against the framework

Five things.

One: **this case is close to a controlled test of the thesis, and the thesis passes.** The standing claim is that structural change never comes from the ruled, because a functioning floor of force crushes them. The usual objection is that the claim is unfalsifiable in that form: of course the peasants lose when the state is working. Al-Andalus between 1009 and 1031 removes the objection. There was no functioning floor. There was no state. There was no army available to suppress anything, no administration to identify anyone, no treasury, no capital, and for two decades every armed body in the country was fully engaged against another armed body. The conditions were as favourable to a rising from below as they have ever been anywhere.

Nothing rose. And when the fragments settled, they were the same fragments. The demonstration is not that the ruled were defeated; it is that they did not attempt it, because attempting it was not among the things available to people who had no organisation, no arms, no leadership formed to command, and — as the previous module established — no vocabulary of collective claim to make one in.

Two, and it is a refinement to the exhaustion crack: **where an army is paid from external plunder, the exhausting event is peace.** The framework's second crack is a floor shattered from outside by great-power war. Here the floor was shattered by the cessation of war. Al-Mansur's reform of 991 converted the army from a land-based force into a cash-based one, and closed the resulting fiscal gap with annual profitable campaigning. That system had no idle state. When the campaigns stopped in 1009 for reasons internal to the palace, a large body of professional soldiers with no land, no kin and no alternative employer became, overnight, a problem with no solution except to take things.

The diagnostic follows directly and is portable: **identify what pays the army, and then ask what happens if the activity generating that revenue is interrupted for two years.** Where the answer is that the soldiers have nowhere to go, the order has a fuse, and the fuse is lit by anything that stops the campaigns — including a death, a succession dispute, or a victory so complete that there is nothing left to raid.

Three: **a fractured elite with money buys an army instead of arming the people, and the seller inherits the fracture.** The framework holds that fracture arms the people against itself — one faction hands the crowd through the door as a weapon. That is what happens when population is the only resource a faction has. It is not what happens when there is cash and a market. In 1009 and 1010 both Andalusi factions went shopping in the same place: the courts of Castile, Barcelona and Urgell, where armed retinues could be hired for pay and plunder.

The consequence is that the party who gained most from the fracture was neither of the parties to it. The northern counts took the money, learned that the caliphate was a corpse, and within a generation their successors had reversed the direction of tribute across the peninsula. **Where a fractured elite outsources its violence, the structural change accrues to the supplier.** And the absence of popular mobilisation follows from the same fact: an elite that can hire has no reason to arm, which means the population is never even offered the weapon that, in the framework's standard case, is what puts it in the story at all.

Four: **the map of the successor states is a photograph of the arrangement's interior.** Al-Andalus fragmented along exactly the lines of the blocs described in the module on elite coordination: Arab lineages, Berber regiments, palace slaves, a vizier's family, a judge's family. This is a useful and cheap analytical tool in both directions. Where an order's internal structure is obscure, look at how it fell apart, because a collapse is a decomposition and the pieces are the components. And where an order's internal structure is known, the collapse map can be predicted from it — which is to say that the thirty taifas were legible in 1007 to anyone who had a list of who was owed what.

Five, holding the honest objection: the crowd was not nothing, and its causal contribution should be stated at full strength before it is placed. The Córdoban populace's hostility to the Amirids and their imported Berber troops was a real force. Muhammad ibn Hisham's coup in February 1009 needed it and probably would not have succeeded without it. The crowd deposed and installed caliphs repeatedly across the following two decades, and in 1024 it killed one. Its pressure was a genuine cause of the sequence of events.

But it was the weight, and the lever was worked above. Every man the crowd raised was an Umayyad prince or a Hammudid claimant, drawn from the same pool as the man it pulled down. Its single substantive demand — expel the Berbers — was executed by a claimant who needed its numbers, and the execution of that demand produced the siege and sack of its own city four years later. When the war was over the crowd had lost its city, its palace, its position as the capital of the western Islamic world, and the pre-eminence of the only place in al-Andalus where a crowd had ever mattered at all; and it had gained nothing, because it had never asked for anything it could keep.

That is the shape of the whole thesis in one city. The people were present at every opening, indispensable at several, and the author of nothing — and the reason they were the author of nothing is not that they were weak or slow or badly led, but that they had never been given, and had never taken, the two things that would have been required: an organisation that could survive the arrival of professional soldiers, and a claim that would still have meant something the morning after the man they wanted dead was dead.

A note on sources. The chronology of the *fitna* — the death of al-Mansur in 1002 and of Abd al-Malik al-Muzaffar in October 1008, Sanchuelo's nomination as heir a month later and his death on 4 March 1009, the coup of Muhammad II in February 1009, the expulsion of the Berbers and their alliance with Sancho García of Castile, the battle of Alcolea in November 1009, the proclamation of Sulayman, Muhammad II's hiring of Ramon Borrell of Barcelona and Armengol of Urgell, the restoration and disappearance of Hisham II, the sack of Córdoba in 1013, the passage of the caliphate to the Hammudids in 1016, the reign of forty-seven days and the mob that ended it in January 1024, and the abolition of the caliphate in 1031 — follows the standard reference accounts. Those accounts differ on several dates within 1009–1013, notably on the sequence of Muhammad II's second reign and death and on whether Madinat al-Zahra was destroyed in 1010 or 1013; the disagreements are noted rather than resolved, and nothing in the argument turns on them. The count of successor principalities is given variously as at least twenty-three and as more than thirty depending on whether minor lordships are included; the range is given.

The classification of the taifas by the bloc that founded them — Arab lineages at Seville, Zaragoza, Murcia, Lisbon, Mértola, Silves, Huelva, Niebla and Mallorca; Berber commanders at Granada, Málaga, Badajoz, Toledo, Carmona, Arcos, Ronda, Morón, Albarracín and Alpuente; *ṣaqāliba* at Valencia, Denia, Almería and Tortosa; the Jahwarids, a vizier's family, at Córdoba; the Abbadids, a *qadī*'s family, at Seville — follows the standard reference accounts and the specialist literature on the period. Individual attributions are contested in a few cases, notably Toledo and Murcia, and

the argument here does not depend on any single assignment; it depends on the absence of any founder from outside the pre-existing hierarchy, which is not contested in any account consulted.

The statement that no rural rising occurred during the *fitna* is an argument from the silence of a source tradition, and its force depends on the character of that tradition, which is argued on the page: the Arabic historiography of this period is dense, factional and event-driven, records the movements of every commander and claimant, and would have recorded a rural rising as an event in the war. A reader who knows of one should say so. The role of the Córdoban populace in the coups and depositions of 1009 and 1023–1024, including the mob of unemployed workmen that forced the execution of Abd al-Rahman V, is reported in the same tradition, which is to say by writers close to the elite and disposed to describe crowds unsympathetically; that bias is registered, and it cuts in the direction of *overstating* rather than understating popular agency, since a chronicler blaming a mob has an interest in its power.

The account of the *parias* and of the reversal of tribute across the peninsula in the decades after 1031 lies beyond this study's terminal date and is stated in outline from the standard accounts, as the beginning of a process the final module will have to weigh. The fiscal argument about al-Mansur's army reform of 991 and its dependence on annual campaigning is developed with its sources in the module on extraction. The framework's account of the four cracks — fracture, exhaustion, conquest by a rival elite, and elite overproduction — and of the common man as the weight on a lever worked from above, is the project's own, and the refinements offered here are stated as refinements to it. As throughout this study, the narrative substrate descends from writers connected to one or another of the parties, and the reader should weigh the treatment of the losers accordingly.

MODULE 11

Struck from the Public Register

The grim accounting — three centuries of the sword's toll, the metabolic note that came due in 750, and the administrative act by which a state subtracted its own dead.

An order forgets

By the year 1000 nobody living in al-Andalus experienced the arrangement as the product of violence. It was three centuries old. The men who had crossed the strait were as remote from a Cordoban craftsman as the Norman conquest is from a Londoner today, and considerably less discussed. The mosque was where you prayed, the *qadi* was where you went about a debt, the coinage was the money, Arabic was the language you did business in, and the fact that all of this had arrived on the peninsula in the baggage of an army was not a live thought.

That is what a completed build looks like from inside, and it is not a failure of memory. It is the process working. An order that still has to remind people how it got there has not finished.

This module does the arithmetic the order stopped doing. It has two columns. The first is the sword: what the establishment, maintenance and dissolution of this arrangement cost in killed, enslaved and displaced. The second is the metabolic note — the debt an advanced society runs up by lifting its population above what the land would carry unaided, which falls due whenever the coordination that lifted it is interrupted.

Neither column can be totalled. The figures do not exist, and this study will not manufacture them. What can be done is to establish the shape of each, and to identify the items that the order's own accounts and the modern literature both routinely leave out.

The register

Start with the one document in this study that is an actual entry in an actual ledger.

Around 747 a governor named Yusuf al-Fihri was acclaimed in al-Andalus, and, on the account of the Latin chronicler writing a few years later, various Arab rebellions were promptly raised against him and destroyed. Then this:

> *iste descriptionem ad suggessionem residui populi facere imperat atque ut eos, quos ex Christianis vectigalibus per tantas eorum strages gladius iugulaverat, a publico codice scriniarii demerent licet peculando, sollicite imperat.*
> *"He orders a survey to be made, at the petition of the remaining people; and he carefully orders that those of the Christian taxpayers whom the sword had butchered in such great slaughters of theirs should be struck from the public register by the clerks — with peculation, admittedly."*

Read what that clause discloses. There had been massacres, described as the Arabs' own, in the course of the civil wars of the 740s. They were large enough to distort the fiscal base of the province. The Christian communities were still being assessed for men who were dead. Someone had to petition — *ad suggestionem residui populi*, at the representation of the remaining people — before anything was done. And when the government acted, the remedy was not compensation or inquiry but a correction to the tax roll, carried out by clerks who, the chronicler adds sourly, stole while they were at it.

It is one of the coldest sentences in the whole record, and it is also, in a specific way, the most reliable casualty evidence this study has found. Chroniclers inflate. Panegyrists inflate. Martyrologies inflate. A fiscal register does not: a state correcting its own assessment downwards has every incentive to under-record the deaths, because each name struck off is revenue foregone. When a tax roll is amended for mortality, the amendment is a floor and not a ceiling.

There is no surviving copy of that register, and no number. What survives is the fact that it had to be made.

The sword: the founding

The conquest and its consolidation, 711 to 716, produced violence that the sources describe and do not count.

The nearest witness records that Musa's campaign depopulated by sword, famine and captivity, threw down cities by fire, condemned the elders and the notables to the cross, and killed the young. He records that populations which had accepted terms and then panicked fled to the mountains and died there of hunger. He records the siege of Mérida. And he reaches, a few lines later, for the fall of Troy, Jerusalem and Babylon, which tells the reader that he is writing a lament and not a survey.

The honest position is the one taken earlier in this study: the account establishes that the second wave was materially more violent than the first and does not establish a scale. Enslavement was systematic — the fifth of the captives went to the caliph, and the Latin chronicle unwittingly describes that consignment arriving at Damascus.

What is countable is what did not happen. The peninsula's cities were not destroyed, its agricultural base was not wrecked, its population was not replaced, and within a generation the country was functioning well enough to produce a surplus large enough to fight over. Measured against what the Roman conquest of the same peninsula cost across two centuries, or against what would be done to the Duero valley in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the conquest of 711–716 was a comparatively cheap acquisition of a going concern. That is not a compliment. It is the reason the settlement described in this study was possible.

The sword: the wars among the conquerors

The larger part of the killing in al-Andalus was done by Muslims to Muslims, and it falls into four episodes.

The first ran from 740 to 756: the Berber rising, the arrival of Balj's Syrians, the war between the Syrians and the *baladi* Arabs, the battles outside Córdoba, the Yemeni–Qaysi wars, and Abd al-Rahman I's seizure of the country. This is the period the tax register above belongs to. Sixteen years of intermittent civil war in a province that had been conquered thirty years earlier.

The second is the punitive suppressions: Toledo around 797, where the notables were invited to a banquet and killed; Córdoba in 818, where a suburb was stormed, three hundred of its jurists and notables crucified, the quarter levelled and its surviving population — ten thousand by one report, twenty thousand by another — expelled from the country; Mérida disciplined with a fortress in 835; Toledo besieged again in 852.

The third is the *muwallad* wars, roughly 850 to 928: nearly eighty years in which large parts of the south, the Ebro and the marches were outside Cordoban control and were fought over. Ibn Hafsun's war alone ran for four decades. There are no casualty figures for any of it.

The fourth is the *fitna* of 1009 to 1031: twenty-two years, a capital besieged for years and then sacked, two palace cities destroyed, foreign armies hired in by both sides, and a state dismantled. Córdoba, which had probably been the largest city in Europe, never recovered its position; the taifa that emerged from it was a middling principality.

Set against the framework's own claim — that a floor of force is cheap once belief carries it — the record here is a corrective. The floor of al-Andalus was cheap against the *conquered*, who never rose. It was ruinously expensive against the *conquerors*, who fought each other for the whole three centuries. Almost every corpse in this column is a Muslim, and most of them were killed by other Muslims over the terms of the arrangement rather than over its existence.

The sword: the frontier

For three centuries the Andalusi state raided the Christian north most summers, and the Christian north raided back when it could.

Under al-Mansur the practice reached its maximum: something over fifty campaigns in twenty-four years. Zamora was taken in 981, Barcelona stormed in 985, León in 988, Coimbra in 987, and Santiago de Compostela destroyed in 997. Barcelona's population was killed or carried off; the documentary record of the county was so damaged that legal proceedings afterwards had to reconstruct lost titles by testimony.

These were not battles. They were operations against towns, conducted annually, whose object was plunder and captives — and, as an earlier module established, whose necessity was fiscal, because the professional army created in 991 had to be paid and the campaigns were the payroll. Reading them as religious war is not wrong; it is incomplete in a way that matters, because a religious war can be suspended and a payroll cannot.

The same was true in reverse, at a smaller scale for most of the period, and at a very much larger scale afterwards. This module ends at 1031 and therefore does not account for what the northern kingdoms did to the same population over the following four and a half centuries, but the mechanism was identical and the accounting is not this study's to close.

The chronic item

And now the largest entry in the sword column, which has no date, appears in no casualty figure, and is left out of virtually every popular account of this civilisation.

Al-Andalus ran on slavery, and it was both a destination and a transit market.

The supply had four channels. The annual campaigns against the northern kingdoms produced captives every year for three centuries. The trans-Saharan routes brought people north from West Africa alongside the gold. Mediterranean raiding produced captives from the coasts and from shipping. And the largest and most distinctive channel ran overland from central and eastern Europe: pagan Slavs, taken in the wars of the Elbe and the Vistula or sold on by Scandinavian traders, moved west through Prague, Magdeburg and the Rhineland to the Frankish frontier and thence to al-Andalus. Because the Church forbade the sale of Christians to Muslims and the Slavs of that period were not yet Christian, the trade was legal at both ends, which is why it was so large.

Two contemporaries describe the specialised end of it. Liutprand of Cremona, writing in the tenth century, records the castration of boys at Verdun for the Andalusi

market. And Ibn Hawqal, an Arabic geographer of the same century who travelled in the western Mediterranean, states flatly that the eunuchs of the whole Islamic world came from al-Andalus, because that is where they were castrated, and describes the Slavic lands as being raided from the east by the Khurasanis and from the north by the Andalusians.

A modern estimate for the total inflow of Slavic captives into the Islamic world across this period runs to several hundred thousand and is described by the scholar advancing it as conservative; that figure covers the whole Islamic world and not al-Andalus alone, and no reliable Andalusi share of it exists. What is not in doubt is the visible end of the chain. The caliph's palace held slave women in numbers the tradition reports in the thousands. The administration was substantially staffed by eunuchs. The army from the tenth century contained a large slave component. Three of the successor states that emerged in 1031 were founded by men who had arrived in the peninsula as chattels.

Here is why this belongs at the centre of a grim accounting rather than in a footnote. Every other item in this module has a date. The conquest has a date, the suppressions have dates, the civil wars have dates, the sack of Barcelona has a date. This one has no date, because it was not an event. It was the ordinary condition of the society for three hundred years, renewed every summer by the same campaigns that appear elsewhere in this column as raids, and financed by the same treasury whose revenues an earlier module tried and failed to total.

An accounting that lists battles will always understate an order by a wide margin, because the largest thing an order does is usually the thing it does every year without regarding it as an event.

The metabolic note

Now the second column, and the question of whether it applies at all.

The mechanism is this. A society that coordinates well — that irrigates, terraces, stores, transports grain between regions, and maintains a market that moves food from surplus to deficit — can carry a population substantially larger than the same land would support without that coordination. The extra population is real and it is fed. But it is fed by the coordination, and if the coordination is interrupted, the surplus population is no longer supported by anything. The note comes due, and it is paid in famine and disease rather than in battle.

Al-Andalus is a clear case of a society that ran up such a debt. It expanded irrigation, naturalised new crops, and grew cities of a size the peninsula had not supported since Roman times. Whatever the qualifications on the strong version of that thesis — and

there are serious ones — the direction is not in dispute: more land under water, more crops in the rotation, and an urban population that had to be fed from a countryside organised to feed it.

The note was called twice within this study's period, and the first call can be dated, described and physically corroborated.

The Latin chronicler records, at Córdoba, on the nones of April in the era 788 — 5 April 750 — a Sunday, in the first hour and the second and nearly the third, with the whole city watching:

> *tres soles miro modo lustrantes et quasi pallentes cum falce ignea vel smaragdinea precedente fuerunt visentes. e quorum ortu fame intollerabili omnes patrie Spanie nutu dei habitatores suos angeli ordinati fuerunt vastantes.*
> *"they saw three suns shining in a wondrous manner and as if pale, with a fiery or emerald sickle going before them. And from their rising, by the nod of God, appointed angels laid waste the inhabitants of all the land of Spain with an intolerable famine."*

Strip the theology and the atmospheric optics, and what remains is a dated observation that a catastrophic famine began in Spain in 750 and affected the whole country. The Arabic tradition records the same thing independently, dating a great drought and famine from the year 132 of the Hijra — 750 — and the effects are described in the later literature as running for several years, with the abandonment of settlement in the north and the withdrawal of Berber populations from the meseta and the north-west.

And there is now a physical record. A study published in 2023 assembling pollen sequences from across Iberia and Morocco, together with paleohydrological and archaeological data, finds two statistically significant excursions indicating extreme drought — one in the mid-eighth century and one in the early tenth. The mid-eighth-century signal sits exactly where the chronicles put the famine.

Which means the two columns of this module intersect at a datable point. The drought was climatic and would have happened regardless of who governed the peninsula. The famine's depth was not. The years 740 to 756 were the period in which the coordinating capacity of the Andalusi state was at its lowest for the whole three centuries: a Berber rising, an invading Syrian army, a civil war between two bodies of Muslim troops, a tax base so disordered that the dead were still being assessed, and a succession of governors who lasted months. A country in that condition cannot move grain from a surplus district to a starving one, cannot maintain irrigation works, cannot

police a road, and cannot enforce a price. The note was called by the weather and the size of the payment was set by the state's condition.

The second call is the *fitna*. Córdoba was besieged and blockaded for years and then sacked; a city of that size cannot be fed under blockade, and the tradition describes starvation. The irrigation systems and the market networks in the war zones were disrupted for two decades. And the city's population did not recover — the largest urban concentration in western Europe became a middling town, and the surplus it had carried went somewhere or ceased to exist.

What cannot be counted

This module ends without a total, and the reasons should be stated rather than apologised for.

There is no census from al-Andalus. There is no surviving tax register, no mortality record, no muster roll, no port book. The population of the peninsula around 711 is put at four to six million on a basis that is very thin. The population of Córdoba at its height is given in the literature at figures ranging from around a hundred thousand to several times that, and the higher numbers derive from chroniclers writing centuries later with an interest in the city's greatness. Army sizes are traditional numbers. Casualty figures are almost entirely absent, and where they exist — the three hundred crucified in 818, the ten or twenty thousand expelled — they come from the same tradition and cannot be checked.

What can be said with confidence is the *structure* of the account. An episodic column with dates and almost no figures. A chronic column — slavery — with no dates and no figures, which was almost certainly the largest single item. Two metabolic events which can be dated, described in two independent textual traditions, and now corroborated by a physical proxy, but not counted. And, at the centre, one administrative document that no longer exists, whose making is recorded in a single Latin clause, in which a state subtracted its own dead from a tax roll because the survivors had asked to stop paying for them.

Reading the accounting against the framework

Four things.

One: **the metabolic note is called by climate and its size is set by coordination, and where both a chronicle and a physical proxy exist, the two together do work neither can do alone.** The famine of 750 is attested in a near-contemporary Latin chronicle, independently in the Arabic tradition, and now in a stacked pollen record

showing extreme drought in the mid-eighth century. The chronicle supplies the date and the human consequence; the proxy supplies the physical cause and, crucially, rules out the possibility that the chronicler was amplifying a bad year into a divine judgement for rhetorical purposes. But the proxy also constrains the interpretation in the other direction: a drought is not a famine. What converted one into the other was that the peninsula in 750 had no functioning state — no capacity to move grain between regions, maintain works, or police a road — because it had spent the previous decade in civil war among its own conquerors. **The instruction: date the climatic event from the physical record, date the coordination failure from the political record, and read the famine as the product of the overlap.** Where a drought falls on an intact administration it produces a hard year; where it falls on a collapsed one it produces a demographic event.

Two, and it is this module's main contribution: **the chronic item is larger than the episodic one and is never counted, because it has no date.** Every other entry in the sword column here is an event with a year attached, and events are what chronicles record and what accountings therefore total. The largest thing this order did to human beings was not an event. It was the continuous acquisition, transport, castration, sale and holding of people, running for three centuries as an ordinary condition of commercial and domestic life, supplied by the same annual campaigns that appear elsewhere in the ledger as raids and financed by revenues no one can total. It appears in no casualty figure because nobody was killed in a way that got written down.

The general instruction follows and is portable to every case in this collection: **ask what the order did every year that nobody at the time regarded as an event, and put that at the top of the accounting rather than the bottom.** The test for whether you have found it is that it will be absent from both the order's own records of its achievements and from the modern literature celebrating them, and present in the geographers, the price lists and the sale documents.

Three: **where a fiscal record is corrected for mortality, the correction is the most reliable casualty evidence an order will ever produce.** Chroniclers, martyrologists and panegyrists all have reasons to inflate. A treasury striking names from a tax roll has the opposite incentive at every step: each deletion is revenue lost, the clerks doing it were stealing, and the correction had to be petitioned for by the survivors before it happened at all. Such a record is therefore a floor. It is also very rare, and this study found the fact of one only because a hostile Christian chronicler thought the peculation worth a sneer. **Look for the tax roll before the chronicle, and where the roll is gone, look for someone complaining about it.**

Four: **forgetting is not a failure of memory but the completion of the build, and it runs in both directions.** By 1000 the Muslims of al-Andalus did not experience their position as the product of a conquest, and the Christians did not experience the conquest as a live grievance. That is what an order looks like when it has become the furniture of reality, and it is why the accounting has to be done from outside — by adding up what the order's own records treat as unremarkable, rather than by looking for what it recorded as a catastrophe. The order will have recorded its catastrophes accurately enough. What it will not have recorded is the routine, and the routine is where the weight is.

A note on sources. The Latin quotations are from the *Chronicle of 754* (*Continuatio Hispana*), sections 131 and 132, as edited by Theodor Mommsen, *MGH Auctores Antiquissimi* XI, *Chronica Minora* saec. IV–VII, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1894), public domain; Mommsen's spellings are unaltered and the translations are mine. The governor is identified as Yusuf al-Fihri from the chronicle's own regnal notice in the preceding section, which places his acclamation in the era 785 (747) and dates the famine passage to his sixth year, era 788 (750); the chronicle's several dating systems are not always mutually consistent and this identification, while secure, rests on its internal reckoning. The famine notice is dated by the chronicler to the nones of April, era 788 — 5 April 750 — and the phenomenon described (three suns, a fiery or emerald sickle) is consistent with a parhelion and is reported here as observed rather than interpreted.

The independent Arabic notice of a great drought and famine from AH 132 is in the *Akhbar Majmu'a*, a compilation of uncertain and probably much later date, and is reported at second hand from the modern literature. The physical evidence — two statistically significant excursions in a stacked *Artemisia* pollen record indicating extreme drought in the mid-eighth and early tenth centuries, assembled from Iberian and Moroccan sequences with paleohydrological and archaeological data — is from the study published in *Nature Communications* in 2023 on drought as a contributor to the Visigothic crisis and the Islamic expansion, paraphrased and credited. That study's larger thesis about the causes of 711 is not adopted here; only its mid-eighth-century drought signal is used.

Figures throughout are given as ranges or as attributions and none should be treated as a count. The expulsion from al-Rabad in 818 is reported at ten thousand and at twenty thousand; the crucifixions there at about three hundred; the population of the peninsula around 711 at four to six million on a very thin basis; al-Mansur's campaigns at somewhat over fifty; the population of Córdoba at figures ranging from around a hundred thousand upward, with the higher numbers coming from late chroniclers with an interest in the city's greatness. The account of the conquest's violence in 711–

716 is the *Chronicle of 754*'s and is explicitly a lament, with Troy, Jerusalem and Babylon invoked nearby; it is used here, as in the first module, to establish relative severity and not scale.

On slavery: the four supply channels, the legality of the trade in pagan Slavs at both ends, and the Prague–Magdeburg–Verdun route follow the standard scholarship and are paraphrased. Liutprand of Cremona's notice of castration at Verdun for the Andalusi market is reported from that scholarship and is not quoted, the Latin not having been verified here in a public-domain edition. Ibn Hawqal's statement that the Islamic world's eunuchs came from al-Andalus, and his description of the Slavic lands as raided from the east and the north, is paraphrased from a modern edition and translation and is dated to the tenth century; he is a traveller and a geographer, not an official, and his statement is a strong claim reported without corroboration. The estimate of several hundred thousand Slavic captives entering the Islamic world in this period is from the specialist literature, is described by its author as conservative, covers the entire Islamic world rather than al-Andalus, and is given here with those limits attached. The numbers reported for slaves in the caliphal palace are from the Arabic tradition and are traditional figures.

The sack of Barcelona in 985 and the reconstruction of destroyed titles by testimony afterwards, and the campaigns against Zamora, León, Coimbra and Santiago, follow the standard reference accounts. The argument that the annual campaigns were fiscally necessary rather than optional is developed with its sources in the module on extraction, and the argument about the *fitna*'s course in the module on collapse. The agricultural expansion and the challenges to the strong version of that thesis are set out with their sources in the module on the ordinary man's ledger. This module offers no total, and the reasons are given in the text rather than here.

MODULE 12

The Door That Was Open

Convergence and divergence — where this order meets the corpus and where it stands alone, the one variable that separates a conquest from a colony, and the strongest case its defenders would make, stated at full strength and answered without flinching.

The experiment this case was brought in to run

The peninsula ran the experiment twice.

In 507 a Gothic minority, perhaps a few per cent of the population, took the ground and settled on it. Within two centuries it had lost its language, its confession, its law and its name as a people: by 710 "Goth" survived as a pedigree in a book, a category in the property law, and a stock of names. The conquerors had been consumed by the order they found.

In 711 an Arab and Berber minority, of a comparable order of magnitude, took the same ground from the descendants of the first. Three centuries later the descendants of the conquered were speaking the conquerors' language, praying in the conquerors' religion, and litigating under the conquerors' law — and were producing, out of their own numbers, the jurists and philologists of the conquerors' court.

Same peninsula. Substantially the same population underneath. Comparably small conquering minorities. Opposite outcomes.

Everything in the eleven modules preceding this one has been, among other things, an attempt to name the variables that differed. They can now be listed, and none of them is the one the question usually attracts — which is a claim about the relative vigour, appeal or truth of the two religions involved.

The office. The Visigothic monarchy was elective: the crown was in principle available to any of the magnates, and the consequence across two centuries was a homicidal succession, factions raising and killing kings, and finally two men striking coins in different halves of the peninsula in the same year and an army that came to the decisive battle out of ambition for its own commander's throne. The Cordoban Umayyads held the office as a hereditary monopoly for two hundred and fifty-three years, and no one outside the family ever seriously claimed it. The office was worth coordinating on precisely because it was unavailable, and the arrangement ended within three months of a chamberlain's son making it available.

The direction of the robe. The Gothic kings had no external legitimator after the middle of the sixth century, no sending power, and no continuing supply of their own kind; their most dangerous rivals were other Gothic magnates who needed the same bishops and the same councils. So the contest for legitimacy was conducted entirely inside the conquered population, the robe turned to face it, and within two generations of the conversion of 589 the state's own historian was addressing the country rather than the ruling people. The Cordoban Umayyads had a live external rival of their own kind for their entire existence — the Abbasids they refused to acknowledge, and after 909 the Fatimids who claimed what they claimed. The argument that mattered was an argument among Muslims, and the conquered were never in the room where it was held. For three centuries the state's most widely distributed public statement travelled in the pockets of a Christian population in a script it could not read.

The boundary. The Visigothic state made its boundary uncrossable in the direction people were being ordered to cross it: converts from Judaism were held to a faith taken under duress and then barred from office as *those who are descended from Jews*, so that the disability followed the blood. Enforcing that required an archive of signed abjurations, sureties, the removal of children, episcopal monitors and the same laws re-enacted at council after council for eighty years, ending in a decree of enslavement. The Cordoban state made its boundary one-way in the direction the state preferred, and required no enforcement apparatus at all, because both outcomes suited it: a man who paid was revenue and a man who converted was a soldier.

The floor. The Visigothic floor was summoned — aggregated by muster from the armed households of great landowners, non-existent between wars, legislated into being twice in eight years by statutes aimed upward at the magnates who would not come. It was extinguished by a single lost battle because there was no second instrument behind it. The Andalusi floor was resident and paid, and by 743 attached to the fiscal revenue of named provinces. It could not be dissolved by a defeat. It mutinied instead, repeatedly, for two hundred and fifty years, and finally took twenty-two years to die.

And the formation apparatus. The Goths had none, and were absorbed by the one they found. The conquerors of 711 also had almost none — on the eve, less than the Goths had possessed in 507, with an Arabic chancery eleven years old, an aniconic coinage fifteen, a metropolitan mosque still scaffolded, and an army taught its religion, on its own tradition's account, by twenty-seven instructors. What they did instead was leave the incumbent apparatus standing, capture its chain of command, and build their own beside it with the door open.

That last item is the one that decided the outcome, and it is where this case meets the rest of the collection.

Where this order meets the corpus

Four convergences are close enough to be structural rather than analogical.

The captured hierarchy. In 852 the emir of Córdoba, faced with a movement of public martyrdoms he could not police, did not send soldiers. He ordered the Christian bishops to convene a council and deal with it, and told them plainly that the alternative was the loss of their offices and their livelihoods. The metropolitan presided, imprisoned the movement's leaders, and was described by its own apologist as a man to whom the Christians of Córdoba were subject by royal decree. In the same generation the head of the Christian community of Córdoba was also the emir's tax collector.

Now set beside it the Achaemenid arrangement in Judah, thirteen centuries earlier. A priest and scribe is commissioned by the King of Persia to appoint magistrates over a subject population, apply that population's own religious law, teach it to those who do not know it, and punish refusal with death, banishment, confiscation or prison. And the King's appointed governor of the province — himself a Jew and a former royal cupbearer — is the man who confronts families whose children have stopped speaking the language, and beats them, and puts them under oath about whom their children may marry.

These are the same instrument. In both cases the conqueror leaves the incumbent formation apparatus entirely intact, and governs the subject population through the men that apparatus has already trained the population to obey. The deference formation installs attaches to the office rather than the man, and transfers to whoever holds it; so the occupier does not need to break the office, only to own the man in it. Nehemiah beating fathers over their children's language and Reccafred imprisoning Eulogius are the same act performed by the same kind of person under the same kind of warrant.

The Persian study named this *chartering* and identified the variable that decides whether the outsourced formation becomes an asset or an enemy: whether the conqueror pays its custodians. Córdoba supplies the case where he does not pay and captures anyway — the Christian clergy of al-Andalus received no subsidy and were themselves taxed — and it works, because what Córdoba conditioned was not their income but their continued existence as a licensed body. That is a cheaper version of the same instrument, available wherever the incumbent apparatus has more to lose than to gain.

The imported counter-elite. In 1009 and 1010 both parties to the Andalusi civil war went shopping for soldiers in the same market. The Berber faction hired the count of Castile; the Umayyad claimant hired the counts of Barcelona and Urgell. They were paid in coin and plunder, they rode into the heart of al-Andalus as auxiliaries, they saw at first hand that the caliphate had ceased to exist, and they went home rich. Within a generation their successors had converted the relationship into the *parias* — annual tribute paid by the fragmented Muslim principalities to the northern kingdoms, reversing the direction of tribute across the peninsula for the first time since 711.

In 401 BC a royal prince marched against his brother with ten thousand Greek mercenaries; the rebel satraps of the 360s used Greek troops; independent Egypt hired Greek generals; and the King hired Greeks himself, at Issus and at Gaugamela, against a Macedonian. The Ten Thousand lost their employer in the middle of Babylonia, walked out through the whole empire, and published the route.

Same mechanism. An order that hires its military class from a neighbouring market is paying for its successor's reconnaissance, and there is no way to make the contractor forget the roads. What al-Andalus adds is the fiscal half: the elite that hires does so *because* it has cash and no reason to arm its own population, which is why the standard prediction that a fractured elite arms the people against itself does not hold here. Where there is money and a market, nobody arms anybody. The population is not offered the weapon, which is why it never enters the story.

Commutation. The Persian settlement created bow land, horse land and chariot land to produce archers, cavalrymen and chariot crews from the soil, and within a century and a half the obligation was routinely discharged in silver by hired substitutes financed by a private bank. The empire arrived at 334 rich, solvent, and no longer able to convert land into soldiers.

The Andalusi settlement of 743 put six regiments on a third of the tax revenue of named provinces, in exchange for collecting it and for military service. In 991 al-Mansur abolished those regiments and replaced them with professionals paid in cash, and closed the resulting fiscal gap with annual profitable campaigning. In 1007 the caliphate had the best army and the largest revenues in western Europe. In 1009 the campaigns stopped for reasons internal to the palace, and an army with no land, no kin and no employer went looking for a paymaster and then for territory.

Both orders died solvent. Neither was exhausted in the framework's sense. What had failed in each was the conversion of a settlement into soldiers, and that failure is invisible in every ledger because the revenue keeps rising until the moment an army is needed faster than one can be hired.

The switchable apex. The Persian study found that resistance to a conquest varies inversely with the switchability of the local apex — that countries with a single resourceable head change hands without battles, and countries that present no such head have to be taken by siege. The conquest of 711 confirms it from the other end of the Mediterranean and seven centuries later. One battle at a place we cannot locate, a king who reigned one year and had been acclaimed *tumultuose*, and then a peninsula acquired largely by agreement with proprietors who kept their land, their law and their religion and changed the name at the top of the bill. The Latin chronicler states the outcome without ornament: the kingship having been taken away, he made it tributary.

And the same instrument ran in reverse in the eleventh century. The *taifas* that emerged in 1031 novated their protection to whoever could supply it, and within decades were buying it from Christian kings. A guarantee is a service contract, and a service contract has no loyalty in it because loyalty was never what was purchased.

The colonial predictions, tested

This study was set up with a set of predictions about how a conquest bends when it is a colonial one. Four of the five fail here, and the pattern of the failures is the study's largest finding.

A robe cut for the metropole, not the conquered — half true, in a modified form. The robe was never cut for the conquered, exactly as predicted. But it was not cut for a metropole either, because after 756 there was none. It was cut for the settler elite, then for the wider Muslim world against two rival caliphates.

Formation withheld from the majority, because forming them would mean admitting them — fails completely. Nothing was withheld. The mosque school was open to any convert's son, the jurist establishment of tenth-century al-Andalus was substantially staffed by men of Iberian descent, and the category of Muslim had no ethnic floor in doctrine. The revolts of the ninth century were mounted not by people demanding to be let out but by people who had been let in and were demanding that the promise be honoured.

A seam split in two by distance, whose management is the order's core task — fails. The seam here was made of the alphabet, it cost nothing to maintain, and nobody managed it because nobody had to. And it blinded the ruler as thoroughly as the ruled: when the state needed to know what was happening inside its own subject majority in 851, it had no instrument except that majority's own bishops.

Extraction sorted by caste — holds, with an amendment that changes its consequences entirely. Extraction was sorted, but by confession rather than descent, and the category was exitable by an individual act that the state welcomed. That single

difference dissolved collective grievance among the ruled, moved every fracture to the almost-included, and prevented the accretion of any constitutional residue at all.

Collapse driven by the metropole's will emptying — fails. There was no metropole. The collapse was internal, fiscal and military, and it was a civil war rather than a withdrawal.

The variable

Put the four failures together and one variable accounts for all of them.

The colonial bend is a function of retained exit, not of conquest.

A conquering elite that can go home behaves colonially. It withholds formation, because forming the conquered would mean admitting them to a status defined elsewhere, and the metropole is not offering it. It maintains a seam, because it answers to an audience that must be kept from seeing what is done. It sorts extraction by a category the conquered cannot leave, because the category is what makes the arrangement legible to the people paying for it. And it collapses when the will at the other end of the line runs out, because the conquest was always a project of somewhere else.

A conquering elite that cannot go home does none of these things, and stops doing them fast. The Umayyads of Córdoba had no metropole after 750, because the family that had been the metropole was hunted down and killed in Syria and a single survivor reached the far end of the Maghrib with nothing. They were not administering a possession on behalf of anybody. They were living in the only country they had, and everything follows from that: they built a formation apparatus because they needed the country populated with people they could govern; they left the door open because every convert was a gain and there was no distant taxpayer to whom admission had to be justified; they did not manage a seam because there was no second audience; and when it ended, it ended in a civil war among people who all intended to stay, and every one of the thirty successor states was founded by somebody who had nowhere else to be.

This unifies the collection's modern colonial cases with its pre-modern conquests, and it predicts the direction of travel in the awkward middle cases. The Goths had no metropole after 531 and behaved accordingly — and were absorbed. The Normans in England had one for a century and a half and then lost it, and the direction of their assimilation follows the loss. The test to apply to any conquering minority is not its size, its technology or its century, but a single question: **is there somewhere else these people could go, and does anyone there still care?**

Three positions on the formation axis

The corpus can now hold three, and the third is this study's.

Withhold. The conqueror possesses a formation, knows that installing it would produce belief, and caps it below the level at which belief takes, because forming the ruled would mean admitting them. The field he vacates does not stay empty; the apparatus already running fills it, and produces, in time, his enemy. This is the modern colonial position, and its emblem is a government closing four hundred schools it had never built and could not use.

Charter and pay. The conqueror leaves the incumbent formation standing, subsidises its custodians, and lends it his coercive power against its own defaulters. The result is extremely cheap and the subject population is never formed to regard the conqueror as anything, so the order's real constituency is exactly as wide as its payroll and the whole thing is disposable to anyone who will issue the same charters. This is the Achaemenid position, and its emblem is a King of Persia paying for a foreign god's sacrifices and commissioning a foreign priest to teach a foreign law.

Capture and admit. The conqueror leaves the incumbent formation standing, does not pay it, conditions its continued licence on its own performance, and simultaneously runs an apparatus of his own that any of the incumbent's children may enter. The incumbent apparatus goes on functioning — buildings, liturgy, clergy, councils — while its population drains through the door beside it, one household at a time, over generations, with no persuasion attempted and no coercion required. This is al-Andalus, and its emblem is a bishop of Córdoba's circle complaining in 854 that the Christian young read Arabic better than Latin, sixty to a hundred years before the conversion curve turned.

State the general rule the three positions yield. **An incumbent formation apparatus is not destroyed by attack and is not preserved by tolerance. It is destroyed by an open door beside it, and its own institutional health is no indicator at all of whether that is happening.** In 854 the Church of al-Andalus had its bishops, its monasteries, its liturgy, its councils and presumably its congregations. What it had lost was the next generation's literacy in the language its tradition was stored in, and nothing on any inventory would have shown it.

What this study contributes, gathered

Set out plainly, because the modules were written to compound rather than to announce.

A fourth settlement fiction — **substitution** — beside vacancy, recognition and divisibility: the assertion that the obligation formerly owed to one sovereign is now owed to another, everything else standing. It is the cheapest of them and its precondition is exact: a previous conquest must already have converted the relations into things and left the register running.

A pair beside the summoned floor: the **land-paid** stipendiary floor, which is chronic, provincial and mutinous but survivable for centuries, and the **coin-paid** stipendiary floor, which buys central control and converts a recurring illness into a fatal one. Date the shift and expect the terminal crisis to be fiscal rather than military.

The robe faces the competitor — not the majority, and not the audience whose belief would be cheapest to have. Where the dangerous rival sits inside the conquered population, the conqueror addresses the conquered and is eventually absorbed by them; where the rival is outside and of his own kind, the conquered are never addressed at all.

Capture rather than withholding, with its diagnostic: look for the moment the conquered's own hierarchy is used to discipline the conquered's own zealots, and date it.

Category exit as a third kind of exit beside territorial and internal: exit from the burdened status while remaining in place. Where it exists and the state welcomes it, the burdened never combine, the fracture moves to the almost-included, and no constitutional residue accretes — because a grievance that can be settled by admission produces careers, and only a grievance that cannot produces documents.

A free seam, made of the alphabet rather than of policy, which costs nothing to maintain and cannot be opened from either side.

The unobtainable office as the ideal focal point of elite coordination, proved by what the most powerful man in the country declined to take; and the corollary that such an arrangement fails by a single defection rather than by decay, and therefore fails fast.

Exhaustion by peace, where the army is paid from plunder; and **the seller inherits the fracture**, where an elite with cash outsources its violence rather than arming its people.

The chronic item, larger than the episodic one and never counted because it has no date. And the fiscal correction for mortality as the most reliable casualty evidence an order will ever produce, because a treasury striking names loses revenue at every stroke.

The strongest case, at full strength

Now the counter-position, and it must be stated as its best advocates would state it, without hedging, because a study that softens the case it means to answer has not answered it.

Tenth-century Córdoba was the most advanced society in western Europe and it was not close.

Al-Hakam II assembled a library that the tradition counts in the hundreds of thousands of volumes and that was, on any realistic estimate, the largest collection of books west of Baghdad; he had agents buying in Cairo, Baghdad and Damascus, and he read what they sent. The city supported jurists, philologists, astronomers, mathematicians, physicians and poets in numbers that no Christian capital of the period could have fed, let alone employed. Its scholars worked on medicine, on astronomy, on grammar and on law at a standard that would be transmitted, two centuries later, through Toledo into the rest of Europe and would form part of the material from which the Latin West rebuilt its own learning.

Its agriculture was transformed. More land under irrigation, new crops in the rotation, market gardens around cities of a size the peninsula had not carried since Rome. Its coinage was sound across three centuries. Its roads carried trade from the Sahara to the Rhine.

And its arrangement with its minorities was, by the standards of its own age and of the age that followed it in the same place, remarkable. A Jewish community that had been compelled to baptism, barred from office by descent, had its children removed and had finally been enslaved by decree under the Visigoths, produced within two centuries of the conquest a courtier who managed the caliph's foreign correspondence and a flowering of Hebrew letters that has been called a golden age ever since. A Christian bishop served as the caliph's ambassador to Otto and wrote, with a Muslim scholar, a calendar of the year in Latin and Arabic, dedicated to the caliph, setting the saints' days and the agricultural seasons on the same page. When a Lotharingian monk arrived and had the arrangement explained to him, the first thing he wrote down was that the law bound king and people alike. The chief judge of the caliphate rebuked the caliph from the pulpit over the extravagance of his palace and held office for another sixteen years.

Set that against what the peninsula had been in 700 — a kingdom whose national councils had spent eighty years legislating against a religious minority, ending in a decree of enslavement, and whose crown was contested by force at almost every succession — and against what parts of it would be after 1492. Whatever else the three centuries between were, they were not a dark age imposed on a light one, and the

people who lived through them were, by every measure a person in 950 would have recognised, better off than their great-great-grandparents.

That is the case. It is true. This study has confirmed most of it in the course of trying to measure something else, and none of what follows subtracts from it.

The answer

Set beside it, from the same three centuries and the same treasury, the following.

A price list. One gold dinar per adult male per year, with fixed measures of wheat, barley, grape juice, vinegar, honey and oil — and half for a slave. That was the standing charge for remaining what your family had been, payable annually for a lifetime, and its purpose was less to raise revenue than to price a choice and renew the offer every year in a household with children.

A trade. Al-Andalus acquired human beings continuously for three centuries from four directions — captives taken off its northern frontier every summer, purchases from the overland route that carried pagan Slavs west through Prague and Magdeburg and Verdun, Mediterranean raiding, and the trans-Saharan caravans that brought the gold. A tenth-century Muslim geographer who travelled there wrote that the eunuchs of the entire Islamic world came from al-Andalus, because that is where they were castrated. The caliph's palace held slave women in numbers the tradition counts in thousands. Three of the successor states of 1031 were founded by men who had arrived in the peninsula as chattels.

An army built from that trade, and the campaigns that fed it. Fifty-odd expeditions in twenty-four years, which had to be annual and had to be profitable because they were the payroll. Zamora in 981, Barcelona stormed in 985 and its population killed or carried off, Coimbra in 987, the shrine at Santiago destroyed in 997 and its bells carried to Córdoba on the shoulders of captives to hang in the great mosque as lamps.

A book-burning. In the same decade the library was assembled, the man who took power after its owner's death handed it to a commission of jurists and had the philosophy, the logic, the astronomy and the geometry taken out and burned, because he needed the jurists and the books cost him nothing. When Córdoba was besieged twenty years later, the governor sold off what remained to pay soldiers who were no longer being paid.

And a civil war that ran for twenty-two years, sacked the largest city in Europe, levelled two palace cities on which a third of the state's revenue had been spent for a generation, and ended with the abolition of the office everyone had been fighting over.

Now the thing that has to be said about the two columns, because the temptation is to net them, and netting them is the error.

Both columns stand, and neither cancels the other, because the people in the two columns were not the same people.

The jurist in the library and the boy castrated at Pechina for the eastern market were not the same person, did not know each other, and were not participants in a shared bargain in which one accepted a cost for the other's benefit. The Jewish physician managing the caliph's correspondence and the Christian smallholder paying a dinar a head and watching his sons learn Arabic were not the same person either. The achievement was real and was enjoyed by real people; the price was real and was paid by different real people; and there is no exchange rate between them, because no transaction took place.

This matters beyond the case, because both of the standard accounts of al-Andalus depend on the netting. The romantic account totals the library, the convivencia and the agriculture, finds a positive balance, and calls the period a golden age. The polemical account totals the *jizya*, the slave trade and the frontier campaigns, finds a negative balance, and calls it subjugation with a good press. Both are performing the same operation and both are wrong in the same way. There is no balance to strike. There is a society in which some people had the best library in Europe and other people were sold, and the reason it looks like a paradox is that we insist on grading whole societies as though they were single agents with a single ledger.

Nor was the achievement a by-product of the extraction, which is the sophisticated version of the same error. The library was not purchased with slaves in any traceable sense; the agriculture was not built on the frontier campaigns; the *convivencia* was not funded by the *jizya*. The library and the castration houses were two outputs of the same machine, running at the same time, drawing on the same treasury, under the same caliph — and the machine did not experience them as related, which is precisely why nobody in it had to reconcile them.

That is the most useful thing this study has to say, and it is not a verdict on al-Andalus. It is a warning about the form of the question. Orders are not good or bad on balance. They are arrangements under which specified people hold specified things at specified prices, and the only honest accounting names who was in which column.

Reading the whole against the framework

Three closing contributions.

One: the colonial bend is retained exit, and the corpus should stop treating "colonial" as a period. Every prediction the framework attaches to colonial conquest — the reversed robe, the withheld formation, the managed seam, the collapse from the metropole's will emptying — turns out here to be a prediction about a conquering elite

that has somewhere to go home to and an audience there that still cares. Where that is absent, a conquest becomes a country within two generations, and it does so whether the year is 756 or 1776. The variable is testable in every case in the collection, and it is a single question with a factual answer.

Two: the incumbent formation is destroyed by the door, not by the attack — and its health is no indicator. The Christian apparatus of al-Andalus was never suppressed, never dismantled, and never denied its buildings. It was captured at the collar in 852 and drained through the door beside it over three centuries, and in the middle of that process every institutional indicator it possessed looked sound. What was actually happening was visible in one place only: the language its own elite's children could read. The corpus should carry that as its cheapest diagnostic of formation loss — **stop counting the faithful and count who can read the tradition's own texts** — and should expect the belief to follow the literacy by a generation or two, in either direction.

Three, and it is what the pair of studies on this peninsula was for: the conqueror's grandchildren are absorbed or absorbing according to whether the apparatus admits. The Goths had no apparatus and were taken by the one they found. The Achaemenids had one and never opened it, so nobody in two hundred and thirty years could become a Persian, and the empire was disposable to anyone who would reissue the charters. Rome opened its door and made Gauls into Romans. Córdoba opened its door and, over three centuries, made Iberians into Andalusis — which is the same outcome by the same mechanism, arrived at independently by men solving different problems with different materials in a different millennium.

So the finding is not that Islam converted the peninsula and Arian Christianity failed to. It is that an apparatus which admits can be extended without limit, because every person it forms is a gain rather than a claim; and an apparatus which must exclude cannot be extended at all, because extending it would concede the thing it exists to withhold. The Goths had nothing to admit anybody to. The Achaemenids had something and would not open it. The British had something and could not open it without giving away the point. Córdoba had something, opened it, and did not think of the opening as a concession — because the men who opened it had no metropole to answer to, no distant taxpayers to justify it to, and nowhere else in the world to be.

Which returns this study to the image it started with. In about 710 a governor garrisoned a port he had held for perhaps three years with twelve thousand recent converts and left twenty-seven men behind to teach them the Qur'an and the law. Three hundred years later their descendants' descendants — and the descendants of the

people they conquered, in far greater numbers — were the same people, and the peninsula had a library.

Neither of those sentences explains the other. Both are in the account.

A note on sources. This module makes no primary-source claims of its own; every factual assertion in it is established, with its sources and its flags, in the module it draws from, and a reader testing the argument should begin with those closing notes rather than here. The Latin quotations referred to in passing — the *Chronicle of 754* in Mommsen's edition of 1894, Alvarus's *Indiculus luminosus* in Migne's *Patrologia Latina* 121, and the *Vita Iohannis Gorziensis* in Pertz's text as reprinted in the *Acta Sanctorum* — are all public domain and are quoted exactly in the modules where they do their work. The Arabic narrative material is paraphrased throughout this study with its compilers named and their distance from the events stated, for the reason set out in the landscape: there is no eighth-century Arabic document from al-Andalus, and the tradition that describes the conquest and the emirate was assembled between two and nine centuries afterwards and survives largely in modern editions that cannot be quoted here.

The comparisons drawn in this module are to other studies in this collection and rest on their evidence rather than on new research: the Visigothic kingdom of Spain throughout, and particularly for the elective monarchy, the summoned floor, the anti-Jewish legislation and the direction of the Isidoran robe; Achaemenid Persia for the chartered formation, Ezra's commission and Nehemiah's conduct in the province, the imported Greek counter-elite, the commutation of service land into silver, and the switchable apex; British Kenya for the withheld formation and the closure of the independent schools; and *The Conqueror's Grandchildren*, *The Exploit* and *Elite Chaos* for the framework propositions the three positions on the formation axis are stated against. Where a comparison depends on a detail of one of those studies, the reader should test it there.

Two limits on the whole study should be repeated at its close rather than left in the modules where they arose. First, the narrative substrate for Umayyad al-Andalus descends from the dynasty's own court annalists through an eleventh-century compilation that survives only in part; there is no independent Muslim chronicle of the emirate and no archive against which to check it, and the rebels of this study are described throughout by the men who defeated them. Second, one load-bearing citation still stands on a paraphrase: Alvarus's description of the Christians of Córdoba as subject to Reccafred by royal decree, which supports the capture finding, has not been verified here in a public-domain edition, and the finding should be read as resting on the conduct of the council of 852 as reconstructed in the modern scholarship rather

than on that phrase. The running corrections file kept alongside these modules lists every such item, and a reader who wants to know where this study is thin should read it before he reads anything else.